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ABSTRACT

This document is a collection of three lessons to assist high school teachers in introducing the Arab world to their classrooms. The intended purpose of the lessons is to promote greater cross cultural awareness, understanding of the interdependence of peoples and nations, and appreciation for the different approaches other cultures may choose in trying to solve the social, economic, political, and environmental problems that everyone share. The three lessons contained in this document are: (1) Women and the Family in the Arab World; (2) Central Asia, Past and Present; and (3) Government and Democracy in the Arab World. Each lesson includes lesson objectives, classroom exercises and activities, and suggested background references. The first lesson includes a background essay on women and the family, an essay on the veil and one comparing marriage and family law in the United States and the Arab world, and a short story. Statistical charts on urbanization, labor, education, and literacy also are included in this lesson. The second lesson has a background essay on Central Asia and an essay on the Aral Sea in crisis. Three charts are included: (1) Cyrillic and Arabic alphabets; (2) land and population in Central Asia; and (3) steps to environmental crisis in Central Asia. Maps show trade routes and Central Asia today. The last lesson includes a background essay on government and democracy in the Arab world, individual country profiles, and perspectives on democracy in the Arab world. A timeline shows the course of reform in Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen. (DK)

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ARAB WORLD ALMANAC
1993

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Women and the Family in the Arab World

Lesson Objectives 4
Classroom Exercises and Activities 4–7
Women and the Family in the Arab World *(background essay)* 8–11
The Veil in the Arab World *(essay)* 12–14
Marriage and Family Law in the United States and Arab World *(essay)* 15–16
Urbanization and Labor, Education and Literacy *(statistical charts)* 17–18
The Aunt of Rafiq *(short story)* 19–22
Suggested Background References 23

Central Asia, Past and Present

Lesson Objectives 26
Classroom Exercises and Activities 26–28
Central Asia, Past and Present *(background essay)* 29–34
Cyrillic and Arabic Alphabets *(chart)* 35
Trade Routes *(map)* 36
Central Asia Today *(map)* 37
Land and Population in Central Asia *(chart)* 38
The Aral Sea in Crisis *(essay)* 39
Steps to Environmental Crisis in Central Asia *(chart)* 40
Suggested Background References 41

Government and Democracy in the Arab World

Lesson Objectives 44
Classroom Exercises and Activities 44–47
Government and Democracy in the Arab World *(background essay)* 48–53
Individual Country Profiles 54–57
The Course of Reform: Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen *(timeline)* 58–61
Perspectives on Democracy in the Arab World 62–64
Suggested Background References 65

Individual Country Maps and Statistics 66–84

Evaluation Form 85–86

Introduction

Arab World Almanac was first produced in 1989 to assist high school teachers in introducing the Arab world to their classrooms. Since then, *Arab World Almanac* has covered a variety of topics, including colonialism, the impact of the Gulf war, the Arab world in the two world wars, and the Islamic resurgence. AMIDEAST hopes that the regional focus of *Arab World Almanac* will contribute to a greater understanding of the global community. Its intended purpose is to promote greater cross-cultural awareness, understanding of the interdependence of peoples and nations, and appreciation for the different approaches other cultures may choose in trying to solve the social, economic, political, and environmental problems that we all share.

In producing *Arab World Almanac*, AMIDEAST is indebted to the members of our advisory committee selected especially for this publication. They are: H. Thomas Collins, Codirector, Project LINKS, The George Washington University, Washington, DC; Elizabeth Fernea, Professor, The University of Texas, Austin, TX; James E. Hill, Social Studies Department Chair, Upland High School, Upland, CA; Ann Z. Kerr, Outreach Consultant, Los Angeles, CA; William Miller, Social Studies Program Manager, Louisiana Department of Education, Baton Rouge, LA; Philip Stoddard, Consultant, Bethesda, MD; Jonathan Swift, Global Education Program Director, Stevenson High School, Livonia, MI; and Richard Wilson, Secondary Social Studies Coordinator, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD.

Initially, *Arab World Almanac* was produced three times an academic year. Beginning with this volume, AMIDEAST will publish all three lessons once a year in a single issue. We hope that this new format will provide teachers with greater flexibility in incorporating these materials into their lesson plans throughout the school year.

AMIDEAST brings to *Arab World Almanac* more than forty years of experience in the Middle East and North Africa. Founded in 1951, AMIDEAST is the leading private, nonprofit American organization involved in educational and cultural exchange between the United States and the Arab world. Today, AMIDEAST services include public outreach activities, educational advising, education and training program administration, and technical assistance.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, AMIDEAST maintains offices in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen. AMIDEAST's activities are financed through contract fees for services rendered, grants for special projects, and corporate and individual donations.

AMIDEAST would like to hear your comments and opinions about *Arab World Almanac*. We would appreciate it if you would take the time to fill out the evaluation form at the end of this book. *Arab World Almanac* is a resource for teachers, and we value teachers' comments in determining our future efforts.

Women and the Family in the Arab World

Lesson Plan
Women and the Family in the Arab World

In the Arab world, the extended family is the basic unit of social organization and has been of fundamental economic and political importance in the past as well as today. A host of factors associated with a rapidly growing and developing society is exerting pressure on the traditional family roles and structure, including the role of women.

Historically, Arab women have been the center of the family unit—the hub around which all of its economic, personal, and political activities revolved. Their domain was a private, domestic one with public life viewed as a man's territory. Since independence earlier this century, Arab countries have developed rapidly, undergoing a magnitude of social, economic, and political change in the course of a single generation that occurred in the West over two hundred years. Educational opportunities proliferated, and at least basic education is now compulsory for both boys and girls; opportunities for secondary and higher education are available to both men and women. Increasing literacy rates and the acquisition of technical skills have enabled greater numbers of Arab women to enter the formal labor force, and in some countries, inflation and rising costs of living have made it imperative for women to work to help support their families.

In the process, the traditional divisions between public and private spheres of life have become blurred. The role and vitality of the extended family, and with it the role of women, is the subject of ongoing debate. Some feel that the phenomenon of women in the formal labor force is destructive to the family unit; others argue the importance of participation by both men and women in the formation of a better future. Related to this debate is the application of Islamic law regarding marriage and divorce, inheritance, and child custody, which is adhered to in most Arab countries even though secular law governs other aspects of society.

In spite of the transformation that many aspects of Arab society has undergone, the family structure and its role in society remains intact. In many cases, the family unit has actually been strengthened, and it continues to be one of the few institutions on which individuals feel they can depend in the midst of change and uncertainly.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Discuss the extended family structure and the traditional roles of men and women in the Arab world
- Identify some of the factors that have brought more Arab women into the formal labor force
- Explain some of the positions in the debate over the rights and roles of women and postition of the extended family
- Discuss the conceptual differences between religious law and secular law, and the process and extent to which each might be changed
- Compare and contrast the development of women's rights in the United States and in the Arab world over time
- Explain the significance of veiling and discuss the extent to which it is practiced in the Arab world
- Compare and contrast the issues and perspectives concerning women and family in the Arab world with those in the United States

Classroom Exercises and Activities

♦ Distribute copies of the essay "Women and Family in the Arab World." You may want to highlight words with which students may be unfamiliar and have them review or define these terms before reading the essay, or discuss them using contextual clues. The following discussion questions focus on the essay's main themes and further the lesson objectives outlined above.

1. Discuss the role of the extended family in the Arab world and the functions it serves. Which of these functions are provided by public or nonfamily private institutions in the United States? Which do you think is more dependable—family or nonfamily providers—and why? Would you answer the same for the United States and the Arab world? Explain your answer.

2. A few highly publicized incidents have given the phrase "maintaining family honor" a violent and vengeful connotation. Are there ways this philosophy could have a more positive influence? (Students might consider such issues as crime rates, child abuse, rape, etc., the incidences of which are significantly lower in the Arab world than in the United States.) To what extent do American families practice a similar philosophy?

3. Discuss the various perspectives in the debate concerning the position of women in Arab society. To what extent are these viewpoints similar to or different from those represented in the United States? (Students may want to think about the significance of "family values" as an issue in the 1992 presidential campaign.) What would you say are the major differences between this issue in the United States and in the Arab world?

4. Explain the relationship in the Arab world between industrialization and urbanization, economic pressures, labor migration, and the changing role of women. Do you think that a questioning of the role of women in society would have occurred even if these pressures had not developed? Students may want to explore comparisons with the struggle for women's rights in the United States and the conditions which precipitated it at various stages.

5. In some "modernization" theories, social scientists maintain that only when people's primary loyalty or allegience is transferred from the family to the state can modernization occur. Discuss the merits of this premise. In what regard would you agree with it? Disagree with it? Give examples from Arab, American, and other societies to support your answers. A tangential discussion might revolve around the definitions and goals of "modernization" and whether there can be different but equally valid paths to these ends.

6. The essay describes some of the ways that the Arab family has adapted in response to other changes in society. Can you identify similar examples of such adaptation in the United States? (Students might consider frontier life during the period of western expansion, the world wars, the Great Depression, etc.)

♦ Before distributing to students the short essay on veiling which begins on page 13, show them the picture on page 12 and ask them to describe the lifestyle and attitudes they would expect of a women dressed this way. This can be done in the form of a group discussion, or alternatively, students can write their thoughts in a list or a short character sketch. Then distribute the essay.

1. Discuss the significance of the veil as described in the essay and the different messages its wearers might be sending. To what extent does the range of possibilities differ from those identified by students before they had read the essay? Is there any way to know by sight alone which of these characteristics might apply to a *particular* women? What does this suggest about stereotypes?

2. Discuss how social attitudes dictating dress have evolved in the United States.

Teachers are encouraged to photocopy any or all components of *Arab World Almanac* for classroom use.

The statistics on urbanization and education have been compiled from data published by the World Bank. Statistics for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were not available; those for Israel include Arab-Israelis.

Are men and women expected to cover the same or different parts of the body? How do today's fashions differ from those of 20, 50, and 100 years ago? Give examples of how styles have become more revealing and less revealing.

3. The essay states that the veil, as a physical barrier between men and women, reflected and promoted restrictions on the interaction of men and women in society. Think about the social limitations that exist in American society. Are there things which are considered acceptable for men to do but not women? Vice versa? Discuss the similarities and differences between Arab and American societies in this regard. Does the absence of a physical manifestation of social limitations make them any less real?

4. In Arab countries where women are covered most extensively, what is the most common mode of dress for men? How similar or different is it from women's dress? Discuss possible reasons for dressing this way that would apply to both men and women.

♦ Ask students to read the essay on "Marriage and Family Law in the United States and the Arab World" which begins on page 15. Then discuss the questions below.

1. Explain, in your own words, the source of laws pertaining to women in the American legal system and in Islamic law. At the time the United States Consitution was adopted, in which legal system did women hold greater recognition and status?

2. American laws pertaining to women were developed over more than a century and continue to be enacted and revised. To what extent does this seem to be happening in Islamic law? Discuss the process of change in secular law versus religious law; why is it more difficult to change religious law?

3. Issues that, on the surface, have little to do with women or the family can ultimately effect them. For example, in the United States, legislation concerning women stemmed from concerns raised over such issues as the debate over slavery and conditions in the workplace. In the Arab world, discuss the extent to which attitudes and laws concerning women might be affected by such issues as the Islamic resurgence, calls for popular participation in the political process, and the worldwide recession.

♦ Statistics for various Arab countries as well as several other countries for purposes of comparison are listed on pages 17 and 18; these include statistics for urbanization, women in the formal labor force, women in education, and literacy rates. Distribute the table to students and ask them to graphically represent the statistics in the form of bar charts or graphs. You might consider having each student do this for a single country, and then display all charts together.

1. In general, what appears to be the relationship between changes in urbanization, women in the labor force, and women in education? Do you think the relationship is a causitive or interdependent one? Explain your answer.

2. "Formal" labor is defined as persons who perform work for pay or profit; who hold a job but were absent due to illness, injury, vacation, or other reasons; or who are unemployed but actively seeking work for pay or profit. "Nonformal" labor consists of people who contribute to economic activity but whose services are not reported in surveys or censuses; it might include agricultural workers, petty traders, and certain service providers. Examine the statistics for women in the labor force. What kinds of employment do you think have been counted? What kinds might have been omitted? How would you expect the figures to change if nonformal labor were included? Do you think the magnitude of change in the Arab countries would be greater or smaller than in the Western countries for which figures appear? Explain your answers. (It is generally accepted that female participation in the labor force of most Middle Eastern

countries is grossly underestimated. Students might want to consider some of the reasons for this.)

3. Examine the statistics for education. (Students can be asked to calculate the percent change at the primary and secondary levels for each country.) In general, at which level has change been the greatest? Has it been more significant for females alone, or for male and females combined? Has the degree of change been more significant in the Arab countries or in the Western countries listed? What does this suggest about the pace of change in the Arab world today?

4. Look at the statistics for women in secondary education. If you had only this information available, what might you conclude about women's access to education? How would your conclusions be affected by learning: that in many of these countries, education for both males and females is compulsory only through the junior high level; that in many universities, nearly as many women as men are enrolled? Now look at the overall (total) participation rates for secondary education. Does this information change your conclusions at all? Students might want to discuss the differing conclusions to be drawn from selective use of statistics.

♦ On pages 19-22 is reproduced a short story in translation on which the following questions are based.

1. Discuss the main character's various family roles and relationships as portrayed in the story. Would you characterize these relationships as traditional or not? Explain your answers.

2. In what ways has the protagonist rejected the traditional roles, activities, and expectations of women in Arab society? In what ways does she accept them? Discuss the internal struggle this causes. What would it take to make her happy?

3. Does the aunt of Rafiq have more than one allegiance? If yes, what are they? Does she feel any conflict between them?

4. Do you think the aunt of Rafiq wears a veil? Cite details from the story to support your answer.

"The Aunt of Rafiq" is reprinted, with permission, from *Women and the Family in the Middle East*. Elizabeth Fernea, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.

Women and the Family in the Arab World

by Elizabeth Fernea

Elizabeth Fernea is professor of English and Middle Eastern studies at the University of Texas, Austin. She has written extensively on issues concerning women and the family in the Middle East, and she is also a noted filmmaker on this subject.

The position of women in Arab society is the subject of much discussion within the region as well as in Western countries. However, women's position cannot be considered in isolation, for women, like men, are perceived primarily as members of a group rather than as isolated individuals. In many ways, their welfare, rights, and responsibilities are related to the welfare, rights, and responsibilities of the group to which they belong. The primary group to which Arab women belong is the family. Hence, it should come as no surprise that the primary demands of Arab feminist groups are not for greater freedoms for women as individuals, but to equalize or ameliorate their position within the family.

"Family" can mean different things in different societies. In the West, "family" is understood as one or two parents and their children. The Arabic word for family, *ahl* or *ahila*, is a more comprehensive term that includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins, many of whom may even live together. The Arab family is also patrilineal, a form of social organization found in probably 80–90% of human societies and one that appears in the Middle East as early as 3000 BC in ancient Sumeria.[1] This means that the name of the child and the inheritance pass through the male line. It is the extended family unit, together with the Arabic language and the religion of Islam, which serve as constants in the midst of the great diversity which otherwise exists among the Arab countries.[2]

In the Arab world today, the issue of the family is not a narrow "people's" issue, separate from economic and political matters, as it tends to be in Western society. Rather, it is of fundamental economic and political importance, for the extended family remains not only the basic unit of social organization, but the focus of social change currently in progress throughout the region. Some Arab leaders and scholars view the family as an indispensable social institution under siege; others believe it to be outdated and repressive. However, none can deny the central role it plays in shaping their society. For thousands of years in most societies around the world, the family has represented the economic center of daily life, in terms of both production and consumption. The family group has been the basic means of social organization in bedouin, rural, and urban societies in the Arab world, performing many of the functions now expected of national governments in the West.

In the past, and still to a great extent today, the family provided economic and emotional support to its members, which might consist of groups as small as twenty or as large as two hundred. The family unit was constantly changing and evolving, as it was expected that each individual member would marry and begin a family of his or her own. Through this family structure, through the family's customs and social mores, an individual "inherited" his or her religion, class, and cultural identity.

The family served as an employment bureau, insurance agency, childcare center, family counseling service, matchmaker, rest home, bank, pension plan, home for the handicapped (including the mentally ill), and hostel in time of economic need. Men and women both remained members of their natal families for all of their lives, even after marriage. A divorced woman returned to her natal family, which was responsible for her support until remarriage. A divorced man returned to his natal family, and his parents cared for his children. In exchange for these services, individual family members were expected to place the group's survival and prosperity above their personal aspirations and desires, especially at the

1. Sumeria was located in what is today Iraq.

2. Most Arabs—about 90%—are Muslim, but there are significant Christian and Jewish communities in several Arab countries.

time of marriage, and to uphold the reputation of the family by behaving properly and "maintaining the family honor."

This, of course, was the ideal. In everyday life, ideals are not always realized. Some rebeled and refused to marry the person chosen for them by their family. Others refused to take in divorced relatives, sometimes because of poverty, sometimes out of spite. Maintaining the family honor has sometimes resulted in tragedy. And, caring for the handicapped and elderly put considerable stress upon the younger members of a family. Unfortunately, it has often been these exceptions, rather than the general rules, that have been highlighted in Western media.

The institution of the family has persisted because it fills real needs for people, people for whom no other institution exists. The shift that took place in the West, the assuming of economic and social responsibilities first by the religious hierarchy and then by the secular state, has not taken occured in the same manner in the Arab world. Therefore, any change in the place and function of the family in the Arab world has far-reaching implications, for it involves not only the extent to which certain responsibilities should or will be passed from the family to the state, but the definition of basic individual rights: those of women, men, and children. The status of women is not an isolated issue but rather the core of the whole matter, for women have always been seen as the center of the family unit, the hub around which all its economic, personal, and political activities revolves.

Before discussing the current status of Arab women one must first examine their traditional role within the family and explain how recent changes in Arab society have affected this position. Historically, the primary role of Arab women, like that of Western women, has been a domestic one. But in the Arab world, there was a much stricter segregation of the sexes that divided the society into the spheres of family and outsiders.

The home was considered a woman's domain, with domestic responsibilities such as the preparation of food and—most importantly—the bearing and rearing of children. A woman was expected to "ease the burden" of her husband, who provided for all. The home was the center of family life, which often included religious life. Public affairs in commerce, education, religion, and politics were men's affairs. Male dominance also extended into the private sphere; a man not only provided for the family, but he was the undisputed head of household and was responsibile for protecting the family's honor and reputation.

Within the last two hundred years, the traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women have been challenged. The 1950s saw the rise of movements to establish independent nation-states. By 1962, nearly twenty states existed in the area ruled earlier as territories first by the Ottoman Empire and then the European colonial powers.[3] These new nations sought to enter the world economy, to industrialize, and to provide greater political, social, and economic opportunities for citizens. Changes that took place in the West over the course of two hundred years occurred in the Arab world in just a few generations. The tremendous expansion of educational opportunities at all levels for both men and women, technological innovations, urbanization, and inflation and rising costs of living have all had an impact on the ways and means of social interaction and expectations.

Not surprisingly, these changes have placed tremendous stress on the two mainstays of Arab society: Islam and the family. Changing economic conditions have blurred the distinction between the traditional spheres of family and outsider, prompting an examination and redefinition of familial roles.

One area in which the changing family structure is reflected is employment statistics. Economic pressures in the non-oil-producing countries have encouraged significant numbers of men to work abroad in the oil-producing countries of the Gulf, or

3. The Ottoman Empire was the last of the great Islamic empires. Beginning in about AD 1300 as a principality, it was well on its way to becoming a major world power by AD 1500. At its greatest extent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire extended from Persia (Iran) almost to Vienna (Austria), across North Africa to Algeria, and south along the periphery of the Arabian Peninsula.

as agricultural laborers in other countries. In 1988, 2.5 million Egyptians alone were working abroad, either in Iraq or the Arabian Peninsula. In many cases, this situation created the imperative and the opportunity for more women to assume nontraditional roles and responsibilities, including that of head of household in place of husbands and fathers working abroad for extended periods.

Greater access to education and technical training has provided a growing number of Arab women with the skills necessary for entering the formal labor force. Just fifty years ago, only an elite few received traditional Islamic education or Western secular education in European missionary schools. Today, free or highly subsidized public education is available to almost everyone in an every-growing number of primary and secondary schools, technical institutes, and colleges and universities. The percentages of women at all educational levels have risen significantly over the past several decades, and in most countries, national campaigns have contributed to an increase in the literacy rate among adults who did not receive a formal education. As a result, Arab women are now qualified for employment in virtually every field. Their expectations for employment and a greater role in public life have increased accordingly.

These changes are not appearing in the same form throughout the Arab world. In the oil-producing countries of the Arabian Gulf, for example, few women work out of economic necessity, and women's economic activities are generally separate from those of men. In the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, and North Africa, rising costs of living and low family incomes are encouraging more and more women to take jobs outside the home. Some enter traditionally male-dominated fields like law, engineering, and medicine as well as teaching, business, and the diplomatic service, but the majority work—as American women do—in industry, shops and offices, and in the service sector. Many work not for self-fulfillment, but to help put bread on the table.

How has the family unit fared with women in the workplace and many of the men away from home for long periods of time? This issue is an extremely important one in the Arab world today. Some thinkers argue, in the press, on television, and in learned academic journals, that women must not be allowed to work outside the home and that men must reassert their role as supporters and protectors of the family. Others, equally fervent, argue the importance of participation by both men women in the formation of a better future for all; they feel that women need to work so that the family can stay together, whether the "family" is defined as the nuclear family, the extended family, or the *umma*—the Muslim family.

The debate on the family concerns not only women's status, but the laws of most Islamic countries and the issues of education and family planning. Current national laws in all Arab countries except Tunisia and Lebanon are based in whole or in part on Islamic law, or *Shari'a*, a compendium of laws based on the Qur'an, the Hadith, and precedent and consensus.[4] Family law within the *Shari'a* controls marriage and divorce, inheritance, and child custody. Women and men arguing for reform state that only if women have equal access to divorce, child custody, and inheritance can the traditional family structure survive and become viable in modern society. Those supporting the continuation of traditional practices maintain that the old laws must remain in force if the ideal Islamic society is to be realized.

This debate about women's place is basically about the role and function of the family in a society where the role of the state is increasing. Family planning is obviously related to the debate. Some argue that limiting the size of the family and the practice of abortion is not only forbidden by God but weakens the strength of the family unit. Others argue that God permits family planning and abortion, as stated in the Qur'an, when the survival of the family is at stake. And here they cite modern statistics to support their case: a three percent annual birth rate in Egypt and the doubling of the population of Morocco in a single generation.

4. The Qur'an is the written record of what Muslims consider to be the final revelation from God through the Prophet Muhammed. The Hadith are the compiled traditions and sayings of Muhammed.

Public education for both men and women serves as a kind of mediator in the debate about the family. No one argues against education in the Arab world; it is a highly respected and desired commodity. The Qur'an itself states, "Educate your child for tomorrow." But the way in which education is administered varies. In Saudi Arabia, women are not allowed to attend classes with men or even have male instructors in the room; some university classes for women are thus held on television. But this is not true for other oil-producing countries, including Kuwait. Poorer countries do not have a choice, and there, coeducation is provided often for pragmatic rather than idealistic reasons.

While the debate rages, of course, ordinarily people have to go on living. Lives are slowly changing under the impact of industrialization: women working outside the home, the rise of education and the media, an increasing urban population, greater geographic as well as social mobility. Some Arab and Western social scientists see these trends as optimistic signs of modernization and Westernization, a presumed "good" in comparison with the old traditional ways. Others view these developments with alarm and fear.

In the midst of it all, the extended family structure is still a plus for many millions of people. "In times of change," one Moroccan woman says, "I need my family more than ever. My mother takes care of my children so I can work, and our cousin from the country has come to live with us so she can go to school in the city." Many people see social mobility, urbanization, women working outside the home, and education as ways of improving and strengthening the family unit rather than weakening it.

To many observers, the Arab family seems not to be disintegrating, but rather regrouping and reorganizing in answer to contemporary needs. In places where the family unit itself has disintegrated, due to war, natural disasters, or economic conditions, the values and the functions of the family are resurfacing in different forms. Workers abroad group together on the basis of old family ties; young men entering the workforce find jobs in the same factories or businesses as their sisters, cousins, or uncles. For men of elite political groups, family ties continue to be important as political party bases shift. Newcomers to the city make connections through family members. Men on their own in a new place may turn to religious "brotherhoods," or groups where, as they themselves say, they "feel like one of the family." Women whose husbands are working abroad often form kin-like ties with neighbors.

Through its adaptations and evolution, the family unit has proven itself to be an interdependent and flexible social institution. For many, it remains the best way to provide for individual needs as well as group survival. If religion is viewed as the soul of the Islamic Arab world, then the wider extended family might be seen as its body. And, says a Moroccan merchant, "The government may come and go—Spanish, French, Moroccan—but my family has been here for 400 years and it is still all I can rely on."

Photo Courtesy of UNRWA

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The Veil in the Arab World

A veiled woman often is the first image that comes to the minds of many Americans when they think of Arab society. Yet, the extent to which veiling is practiced and the message its wearers wish to convey are not so often considered. The practice of veiling is very old, predating Islam, and it is found in some form throughout the Mediterranean world. Today, it remains strongest as a tradition in Islamic countries, although it also serves as a symbol of political opposition.

The basic reasons for veiling in Islam are the injunctions on modesty, as spelled out in both the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammed. As defined in these sources, both men and women must cover specific parts of their bodies except in the presence of relatives and members of the same sex. These areas, known in Arabic as the *'awrah*, are defined differently for men and women. For men it is region of the body from the knees to the navel, and for women it is the entire body except the face and hands. Covering the *'awrah* becomes essential when an individual reaches puberty, and it is mandatory when performing the five daily prayers.

The degree to which women are veiled varies greatly throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds. The most extreme examples are found in Saudi Arabia and Iran. In Saudi Arabia, and to an extent the surrounding Gulf states, women are fully veiled in black, including a face veil and gloves, so that no skin is exposed in public. In non-Arab Iran, the image of women in black, flowing *chadors* predominated during the American hostage crisis and has remained in Americans' mental image of the region ever since.

This degree of veiling is not found elsewhere in the Arab world. Among the Arab countries bordering the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea—Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt—traditional women's dress includes head scarves and ankle-length dresses. Western-style is also prominent, especially in more urban areas. In North Africa, the style, extent, and methods of veiling differ from region to region and are often influenced by neighboring Berber, Tuareg, and Sub-Saharan African cultures. Within each of these regions, the class and status of a woman and her family further influence the style and degree of veiling.

The veil also reflects Arab society's tribal heritage and patriarchal roots. Historically, men were responsible for providing for the members of their tribe and family and for protecting them from harm. Any failure to fulfill these responsibilities diminished the honor of a man and his family as well as their status within the tribe and clan. The loss of honor was an instant sign of weakness that could be exploited by a family's enemies, potentially resulting in the loss of property, privileges, or life.

In this social system, the protection of women was essential. Any slight to the honor of a family's women damaged the honor of the family itself. Men were responsible for preserving the image and reputation of their wives and daughters, and the veil provided a physical means of protection. It guarded women from men's advances and prevented immodest displays which could compromise a woman's status. In addition, the veil supplied a degree of protection from the harsh environmental conditions of the Arabian Peninsula, shielding women from the heat of the sun and protecting them from the cold of the night.

By erecting a physical barrier, the veil helped to institutionalize the social segregation of men and women. This segregation was also extended to other aspects of daily life, such as government, education, and commerce. For the most part, Arab women were restricted to a domestic role in society, although they could wield a great amount of influence within this sphere.

In the last century, Arab society has undergone a rapid transformation. In the process, the role of Arab women has changed, and with it so have modes of dress, including the veil. Beginning with European influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many women, especially in urban areas, adopted European styles of dress; some continued to wear the head scarf, while others abandoned it. European fashions remain common in the majority of Arab countries. At the same time, some women continue to dress in traditional styles because it is dictated by family or society. Others prefer the security and modesty the veil brings. Today, many women working outside the home and mixing with men in the public sector find that the veil is a recognizable sign of their respectibility and provides protection in the workplace.

Also significant are the growing number of women whose mothers and even grandmothers dressed in European styles but who themselves are adopting the veil as a way of showing respect for their society's traditions or opposition to cultural influence from abroad. Many of these women are highly educated professionals; their wearing of traditional clothing does not necessarily mean that they accept traditional gender roles, but rather, that they wish to show respect for and solidarity with their religious and cultural heritage.

The veil represents a tangible form of social etiquette which conveys a message to the members of society. It is also a strong cultural symbol that, as we can see, has been used by different groups—including women themselves—to communicate different messages both within and outside Arab society. Today, the veil's message has changed to reflect new social conditions in the Arab world. At the same time it continues to reflect certain social mores and limits that are recognized and respected by Arab society in general.

Marriage and Family Law in the United States and the Arab World

Throughout the ages, the evolution of societies has been accompanied by the periodic reexamination of social norms and the laws governing them. Among the areas singled out for change has been the role and rights of women. This has occurred in both the United States and the Arab world, but the process and approach has differed greatly between the two societies. American women, originally without any legal rights under U.S. law, have won numerous legal victories through legislation and judicial rulings. Arab women were guaranteed many rights under Islamic law that Western women would not obtain for more than a millenium, but some of these laws have not been adapted to contemporary situations. This is partly because the American legal system is based on secular law, while in the Arab world, most of the laws related to women's issues are based on religious doctrine.

The biggest difference between a secular and a religiously based legal system is the degree to which laws can be changed or modified. In the American legal system, laws can be updated, revised, or repealed through acts of Congress, judicial reinterpretation, or amendments to the Constitution. In comparison, Islamic law is derived from what Muslims believe to be God's final message to mankind and thus carries an implication of infallibility. In most Arab countries today, secular law governs many aspects of society, but family and inheritance matters continue to be governed mostly by Islamic law.[1]

The U.S. Constitution was adopted as the primary source of law for the United States in 1789. It defined the power and responsibilities of the federal government, as well as the relationship between the federal government and the states. Individual rights were established under the first ten amendments to the Constitution, collectively known as the Bill of Rights. At the time of its adoption, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights granted rights to white men alone. The movement for women's rights in the United States began in conjunction with the debate over slavery, which raised many questions about the legal rights of all persons.

Compared to the U.S. Constitution, Islamic law looks at first to be monolithic and unchanging. And yet, this is not the case. How is it that Saudi Arabian authorities can stone a princess and her lover to death for adultery while Muslims elsewhere express their horror and argue that this is not Islam? The answer lies in the fact that the application and practice of Islamic law differ among the various schools of law and the traditions of each country. There are seven distinct schools of Islamic law, each with its own legal specialists and code of precedents; each school respects the others.[2]

All Islamic law, as well as guides for everyday life, are drawn from the Qur'an and the Hadith. All Muslims believe in the centrality and divinity of the Qur'an, the written revelation from God transmitted to mankind through the Prophet Muhammed. The Hadith are a collection of the traditions and sayings of the Prophet during his lifetime. Both have their origins in the prophetic career of Muhammed, which began in AD 610 and continued until his death in AD 632.

Both the Qur'an and the Hadith—but particularly the latter—leave room for interpretation, allowing for the development of new approaches to Islamic law. Further evidence of this flexibility is the presence of secular codes in many countries. In most Arab countries today, secular law has been incorporated to regulate civil and criminal aspects of society; Saudi Arabia, where Islamic law is applied exclusively, is an exception. Secular influences are also reflected in the personal status laws that many Arab countries have enacted to help adapt Islamic family law to changing times. Such laws have been passed in Tunisia, Algeria, and Yemen, as well as non-Arab Turkey. Although the following discussion focuses on a comparison of marriage and family law in the American and Islamic legal systems, it should be remembered that in some Arab countries, personal status laws are used instead of Islamic law.

The American legal tradition of marriage was inherited from English Common Law which governed the American colonies before independence. Under this system, a married woman's legal identity existed through her union with her husband. This was known as the "merger of identities." The husband became legally responsible for every aspect of his wife's life. He was her legal guardian, protector, and provider. The ownership of any property or wealth that a woman possessed before marriage was transferred to her

husband. A married woman was unable to inherit property, make a will, enter into a contract, and sue or be sued. Under such restrictions, it was impossible for a woman to manage and operate a business. These laws were repealed in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Married Women's Property Acts were passed by various state legislatures. The Acts allowed women to retain control of their individual property after marriage, to inherit property, to sue or be sued, and to claim their working income as their own.

American women have also gained rights in divorce which, like marriage laws, are enacted at the state level and vary considerably. They have been accompanied by developments in post-divorce settlements. The terms of the settlement are usually established by the court upon the conclusion of the divorce, but they can also be arranged through written agreements between husband and wife. In most cases, women are entitled to an equal portion of the property obtained by the couple during their marriage. Alimony and child support are also commonly ordered by the courts. Child custody has come to favor American women, but in the past, men were traditionally granted custody because they were the ones with the financial ability to support children. After the passage of the Married Women's Property Acts, this was no longer necessarily the case.

Under Islamic law, regulations regarding women and marriage have remained relatively static since their initial introduction. At the time of their development in the Arabian Peninsula in the early seventh century, however, they were quite radical. Arab society at this time was highly patriarchal; women possessed very little status, reflected in the practice of abandoning newborn baby girls in the desert to prevent a drain on the family's resources. Islam transformed both the status of women and the institution of marriage. Women and men were given equal duties and obligations to God, and marriage became a sacred institution incumbent upon all believers. Islam gave women status as legal persons.

Islamic law guarantees a woman's right to own property and engage in commercial activities, and she is liable for any crimes, injuries, or breaches of contract that she commits. Women are also allowed to inherit wealth and property; however, the amount a woman receives is generally one-half of the amount given to a man. The justification for this rule was that men are considered the providers of the family and thus required greater material wealth.

Islamic law regulated marriage by establishing a series of permissible, mandatory, and prohibited acts. Muslim men and women are forbidden from marrying polytheists and atheists, and while Muslim men can marry Jews and Christians, Muslim women are allowed to marry only Muslim men to ensure that the children will be raised as Muslims. Men were given the right to have up to four wives simultaneously, but only on the condition that they be provided for equally in terms of material support as well as affection. This law drastically changed the pre-Islamic reality, in which men could have any number of wives. The preservation of polygamy actually worked to some women's advantage initially, because during the battles that marked the early decades of Islam, men were often scarce, and polygamy gave unmarried women and widows a better chance for family security. Today some Arab countries have modified the laws regarding polygamy. Tunisia has banned it altogether, and in Egypt, a man must get the permission of his first wife if he wishes to marry another. In most other Arab countries, polygamy is practiced relatively infrequently.

Divorce is permitted under Islamic law, but it is described as the worst of all actions permissible in the eyes of God. All that is required for a man to divorce his wife is that he announce his desire to end the marriage. In certain cases, a woman may initiate a divorce by returning her dowry to her husband. She must then wait a set period of time, usually three months, before remarrying to insure that she is not carrying a child fathered by her former husband. At the end of the waiting period, the couple has the option of reuniting if they decide their divorce was a mistake. If the divorce holds after the waiting period, the wife may return to her natal family. Although in theory the child remains in the father's household, practice varies greatly from country to country depending upon the children's age and sex. New legislation also takes into consideration the best interests of the child.

More egalitarian divorce and child custody laws, as well as equal share in inheritance, are among the major goals of many men and women alike who are pushing for change in the Arab world.

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[1]These aspects of Islamic law are not applied to Christian and Jewish citizens of Arab countries, who follow their own laws and traditions on these matters.

[2]These schools of law include four in the Sunni branch of Islam (Shafi, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Maliki) and three in the Shi'i branch of Islam (Jafari, Zaydi, and Ibadi).

URBANIZATION AND LABOR

Country	% of Total Population in Urban Areas		Females as a % of labor force**	
	25-30 yrs ago	MRE*	25-30 yrs ago	MRE
Algeria	37.6	51.7	4.7	9.6
Bahrain	82.2	83.0	5.7	10.4
Egypt	40.7	46.7	7.0	10.1
Iraq	50.7	71.3	5.0	21.6
Jordan	—	61.0	5.8	10.3
Kuwait	77.7	95.6	5.3	14.6
Lebanon	49.5	83.7	16.1	27.8
Libya	26.2	70.2	5.9	9.1
Morocco	31.9	48.0	11.4	20.7
Oman	4.2	10.6	5.4	8.5
Qatar	76.6	89.5	3.5	7.1
Saudi Arabia	38.8	77.3	4.3	7.3
Sudan	13.0	22.0	20.7	21.9
Syria	40.0	50.4	10.3	17.3
Tunisia	39.5	54.3	8.6	24.4
United Arab Emirates	41.2	77.8	4.6	6.4
Yemen	10.9	29.0	6.9	13.3
United States	71.9	75.0	34.2	41.4
Japan	67.3	77.0	39.1	37.9
France	67.1	74.3	34.8	39.9
Israel	80.9	91.6	27.8	33.7
Turkey	34.1	61.3	39.3	33.7
Indonesia	15.8	30.5	28.6	31.2
Nigeria	17.0	35.2	37.3	34.8
Argentina	76.1	86.3	22.9	28.1

* Most Recent Estimate (MRE) = 1985

** Labor force = "formal" labor force; see definition on page 6.

These statistics are compiled from data published by the World Bank. Statistics for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not available; those for Israel include Arab-Israelis.

EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Country	Enrollment in Primary School as % of Age Group* Ages 6-11				Enrollment in Secondary School as % of Age Group Ages 12-17				Literacy Rates Age 15+	
	FEMALES		TOTAL		FEMALES		TOTAL		Females	Total
	25-30 yrs ago	MRE**	25-30 yrs ago	MRE	25-30 yrs ago	MRE	25-30 yrs ago	MRE		
Algeria	53.0	88.0	68.0	95.0	5.0	53.0	7.0	61.0	45.5	57.4
Bahrain	—	108.0	—	110.0	—	84.0	—	84.0	69.3	77.4
Egypt	60.0	89.0	75.0	97.0	15.0	71.0	26.0	81.0	33.8	48.4
Iraq	45.0	87.0	74.0	96.0	14.0	37.0	28.0	47.0	49.3	59.7
Jordan	83.0	—	95.0	—	23.0	—	38.0	—	70.3	80.1
Kuwait	103.0	91.0	116.0	100.0	43.0	87.0	52.0	90.0	66.7	73.0
Lebanon	93.0	94.0	106.0	128.0	20.0	56.0	26.0	67.0	73.1	80.1
Libya	44.0	—	78.0	—	4.0	—	14.0	—	50.4	63.8
Morocco	35.0	55.0	57.0	68.0	5.0	30.0	11.0	36.0	38.0	49.5
Oman	—	97.0	—	102.0	—	40.0	—	48.0	—	—
Qatar	—	107.0	—	110.0	—	91.0	—	85.0	72.0	75.7
Saudi Arabia	11.0	70.0	24.0	76.0	1.0	39.0	4.0	46.0	48.1	62.4
Sudan	21.0	41.0	29.0	49.0	2.0	17.0	4.0	20.0	11.7	27.1
Syria	52.0	102.0	78.0	108.0	13.0	45.0	28.0	54.0	50.8	64.5
Tunisia	65.0	107.0	91.0	115.0	9.0	39.0	16.0	44.0	56.3	65.3
United Arab Emirates	—	110.0	—	111.0	—	69.0	—	64.0	—	—
Yemen	3.0	—	13.0	—	1.0	—	3.0	—	63.0	38.5
United States	—	100.0	100.0	100.0	—	99.0	—	98.0	>95%	>95%
Japan	100.0	102.0	100.0	102.0	81.0	97.0	82.0	96.0	>95%	>95%
France	133.0	111.0	134.0	113.0	59.0	100.0	56.0	97.0	>95%	>95%
Israel	95.0	95.0	95.0	93.0	51.0	86.0	48.0	83.0	>95%	—
Turkey	83.0	108.0	101.0	112.0	9.0	39.0	16.0	51.0	71.1	80.7
Indonesia	65.0	115.0	72.0	118.0	7.0	43.0	12.0	47.0	68.0	77.0
Nigeria	24.0	63.0	32.0	70.0	3.0	16.0	5.0	19.0	39.5	50.7
Argentina	102.0	114.0	101.0	111.0	31.0	73.0	28.0	74.0	>95%	>95%

* Gross enrollment in schools may be reported in excess of 100% if some pupils are younger or older than the country's standard range of school age.

** Most Recent Estimate (MRE) = 1985

These statistics are compiled from data published by the World Bank. Statistics for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not available; those for Israel include Arab-Israelis.

The Aunt of Rafiq

by Daisy al-Amir, translated from Arabic by Tura Campanella

She looked out of the window at a green forest. The last rays of sunshine would not let the trees become dark yet, and a total silence seemed to cover all of the universe as though with a smooth, unwrinkled robe.

She sat down in the rocking chair. The chair rocked as usual but today she was not moved. The chair did not even squeak like it usually did. Where to find a sound in this silence?

She turned on the radio. A loud voice was speaking in a strange language. What was the announcer saying? What was his commentary on the strange music? Could other voices answer him? Was there no Arab voice in this profound exile of hers?

Tonight was the last night she would spend in this strange country. The mineral baths and the massage had ended in the morning and the attendant had smoothed the last heavy application of black mud onto the ailing parts of her body.

The doctor said in the strange, broken language of this country that she needed physical, mental, and emotional rest.

"Physical rest! Mental rest! Emotional rest!!" he repeated.

She told the doctor she would be unable to obtain any of these rests that he prescribed.

"Why not?" he had asked.

She could not respond. How could she make him understand who she really was? How could she explain the responsibilities that rested on her shoulders, on her head, on her arms?

She had tried to conceal her real identity in this strange country, tried to disguise herself so no one would know she was here, resting her body, her mind, and her emotions.

It was the doctor in her own country who had decided that she was near collapse and needed a retreat where there would be no work or responsibility, only relaxation, sleep, and a pleasant atmosphere. Her brother had nodded, but said after deep thought and careful consideration, "And who will help me while she is gone?"

The strange doctor had continued to question her. What do you do that causes such total exhaustion, such great tension?

She had been puzzled about how to answer. Should she have explained the nature of her work? Should she have said that she is the sister of her brother? In the end, she had said nothing.

When she had left to go to the strange country, her brother had told her not to speak of her work to anyone. "If Arab tourists recognize you," her brother had said, "they will say, aha, the militants behave in a bourgeois manner even though they say they are the militants, the leaders, and the fighters. They will say you are the sister of the militant, the sister of the leader, and the sister of the fighter. Thus you must not behave like a bourgeois."

And he continued to tell her, "Remember, the feeling of fatigue is a bourgeois trait. The collapse of the body in the face of responsibilities is a bourgeois trait. And the frailty of nerves in face of exhaustion and wakefulness is a bourgeois trait."

Her brother had, after all, devoted himself totally to the cause. He had been infused with enthusiasm from the first moment he became aware of the concerns of the homeland. He was the only son in the family, she was the younger sister. She was influenced by what he said and believed in what he did. She was moved by his strong personality and began to voice his opinions and repeat what he said. Then he began explaining the cause to her. She soon found herself engaged in a major military operation. Her brother made her a comrade in the struggle. This increased her commitment to the cause and she spent all her time working.

But her brother—. Despite his enthusiasm and his work for the struggle, her brother managed to find another comrade, a comrade of a different kind. Her brother's new comrade entered his life through an

easy door and became a pampered wife. She, his sister, remained his comrade in struggle.

Other people knew this perfectly well. They knew that she, his sister, was truly his confidant, that every major secret was told to her alone. They knew that behind her brother's unique, captivating personality stood his sister—a solemn pledge to the cause, consulted before all his speeches were made, before all his policies were announced.

But women are assumed to be more talkative than men and people tried to follow her, to ask her questions, direct and indirect. She had passed the test, however, and remained steadfast, not answering any of the tantalizing questions, until her brother's supporters and followers called her the sister of men. They had honored her. They had given her a rank, the rank of those who are known through their brothers!

Soon she recognized that the cause was more important than all human desires and to give it total attention she dissociated herself from the world of women. No visits to the hairdresser or the dressmaker, no trips to the market or morning social calls. For such visits wasted time. She needed the time for the cause.

When her brother's wife bore a son, Rafiq, her brother became known as the father of Rafiq. She found this preposterous. She also found it strange that her brother began to spend part of his time evaluating his son's toys, while her own responsibilities to the cause increased. And she came to be called the aunt of Rafiq. She was no longer called the sister of men. Had men suddenly become little children?

What if she had been called the mother of Rafiq? The idea had not occurred to her before. She remembered an offer of marriage, long ago. She had been engaged very young to a man whom she did not see except through the gifts that his mother and sister gave her....Then her father had decided that her fiance was not suitable and she had returned the gifts.

She had asked, "Why wasn't he appropriate? Why had he been appropriate at one time and not now?"

Her father never answered this question, neither when she asked him herself nor when she sought an explanation from her mother. "Your father thinks this is best for you," was all her mother would say.

She wondered what had happened to those gifts and who was wearing them now.

Whenever her brother returned from a trip, he brought gifts for his wife, his son, Rafiq, and for his friends. For her, he always brought a bundle of new political books.

Once she saw her brother's wife with guests, one of whom was revealing the future to her in a cup of coffee. Then she gave the guest her own cup to tell her future.

In the evening her brother asked in disbelief, "Is this your intellectual level? Have you stooped to the point of wanting to know the future from a cup of coffee? *We* make the future, *we* are the ones who build it. Do we need to look in a cup to tell us what we have to do, or what will happen?"

She asked once what would happen if she stood before the mirror admiring herself as her brother's wife did.

Her grandfather said, "She is a wife, and must make herself pretty to please her husband. But as for you, are you making yourself pretty to please your brother's friends? And what would people say if one of them got interested in you?"

Her brother added, "What if, God forbid, one of them loves you? People would say that I allowed you to participate in a national cause in order to find you a husband. Your proper behavior makes you immune to criticism and your pride in being the sister of men is enough for you." Her brother had laughed merrily. "Isn't that so, aunt of Rafiq?"

She went back to looking out the window. The green forest surrounding the hotel was darker now. The sun had set some time ago. The moment of the sunset had passed and the long dark night had arrived. She had been careful to avoid being watched and recognized while she was here. But this was her last night in this strange country, and she had never explored the life of the night here. She had gotten to know the streets leading to the sanitorium, the massage room, and the room for mud applications. What had she seen in this strange country other than the mineral baths? Even in her room, what had she looked at other than the walls,

the ceiling, and a window overlooking the forest, green during the day, darkening at evening, and black at night, that dreary time of her own sleeplessness.

The bell rang, announcing the hour for dinner. Usually she did not go down the hall but ate dinner alone in her room. Tonight, however, her final night in this strange country, she decided to go down to the restaurant and sit at a corner table away from the gaze of the curious.

For the first time she approached the restaurant, a brightly illuminated room crowded with people. The room next to the restaurant had a sign above its door in red light; "Bar," it said in many different languages.

During the day the room was empty and locked. Night was another world, a new world with which she had not been familiar during the three weeks of her exile. Had the long quiet nights studying political books in her room rested her and made her happy? Was the restaurant forbidden, so she had dinner in her room? Why had the world of the night frightened her? Wasn't she the fighter, sister of men, aunt of Rafiq? Was she more courageous during the day? Why had she eaten her lunch every day in the infirmary restaurant, which was filled with the old, disabled, and sick? And why had she limited her breakfast to the mineral water from the drinking fountain in her room?

She knew why she had kept to herself. But she could not believe that she actually had passed three long weeks in a medical program that claimed to have given her rest physically, mentally, and emotionally! It was time to return home. To the cause. To the work. In her own country, night would connect with day once more and women and men would be considered equally.

Men and women, men and women. She seemed to hear her brother say, "Have you forgotten that you are the sister of men, the aunt of Rafiq?"

After all of this struggle and self-denial and sacrifice, why had she still not reached the point of being called by her name?

Was it not an honor to be a woman? A woman *only*? Why is a woman always the sister of men, the aunt of a child....Why was she not at least the *wife* of a man?

She had finished eating her dinner and had not noticed that the sweet had been placed on a plate in front of her.

She looked about the restaurant....At some tables sat men, at others women, and at a third both sexes sat together. And she...she alone of all the people in this room could not say, if asked, at which table she belonged.

She kept staring at the tables. Did all the people eat the same food? She noticed that in addition to the food, some people had glasses of wine. Here was a world where wine was allowed for both sexes. Her eyes searched for a waiter. She would ask him for a glass of wine. She sat glued to her chair while her eyes looked for him. She saw the waiter serving food, chatting with the people sitting next to her, exchanging conversation with them. Occasionally laughter arose and, sometimes, a loud burst of laughter!

The waiter passed by. He did not seem aware of her presence. But she had not wanted to be recognized all during these three weeks! She had hid herself more years than she wished to remember so that she would not be noticed by others. Of course, this waiter did not giver her a glance. He did not even turn his head.

A voice rang out. She realized after a moment that it was her voice calling. The waiter came to her. She asked him for a glass of wine. He stared at her in astonishment and disapproval. She repeated her request.

He said, "You want wine now, when dinner is over? We are in a restaurant attached to a hospital; the time has passed for ordering wine with dinner."

He paused and pointed outside.

"The bar is on your right as you exit from the main door. They can serve you wine until the sun rises tomorrow."

He left before hearing her reply. Had the waiter provoked her deliberately? Did he know who she was? Even though she had disguised herself these weeks, that did not mean that she was nobody. There, in her own country, a thousand and one individuals desired to talk to her, the sister of men, to learn something about her or her affairs or the affairs of...of...of her brother.

For the first time she asked herself to what had she dedicated her life? To the cause, or to her brother?

The waiter presented her with a check. She signed it and stood up proudly, confident of her reputation in her own country. Tomorrow she would be at home, where people honored her and expected her to speak eloquently.

She walked out of the main door of the restaurant. There was the word written in numerous languages in red light.

Music drifted out of the bar. She entered. The room was crowded and filled to the ceiling with smoke.

She walked among the occupied tables to a small table in the farthest corner. She sat down. The table remained empty, and she was pleased that no one had recognized her.

She wondered if she should ask for a glass of wine? Did she want red or white? Which was known to give a person more courage?

She looked around but no one was watching her. She could ask for whatever she wanted and nobody would even give her a glance. Was that a comfort?

The light in the bar was faint and the clouds of smoke surrounded her. No one could see her in the semi-dark. Was that what she wanted? That no one would see her?

Someone stopped by her table. He gestured toward the empty chair. She motioned with her head that he could help himself to the chair and he did. His features resembled those of the natives of her country and so she turned her face away from him.

The fingers of your hands are lean like the fingers of a man, her brother had said. She withdrew her hands and put them in her lap. The man sitting at her table was not looking at her, but turning his head this way and that. She followed his eyes to a statuesque blond girl with a beautiful face. The blond girl was carrying a tray with glasses and bottles on it.

The sister of men looked attentively at the face of her table companion. In it was grief and longing. The waitress was near the neighboring table but she turned and laughed towards them.

The waitress came over and whispered to her table companion. A word the sister of men, the aunt of Rafiq, did not understand, a word in the language of the people in this strange country. But the table companion was a stranger, too; that was better. But...why was that better?

On the next round, the waitress stopped for some moments and again on another round. Some minutes passed.

The table companion turned and looked at her...She told herself he could not have recognized her. He was a stranger, and he did not know that she as the sister of men, the aunt of Rafiq. He was looking at her directly, at her, herself.

Then he looked down at the empty table before her, and then up at her again.

His eyes asked, "Have you finished?"

And she nodded, "Yes."

Reprinted, with permission, from Women and the Family in the Middle East. *Elizabeth Fernea, ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985 (pp. 209-214).*

Suggested Background References

Abouzeid, Leila. *Year of the Elephant.* Translated from the Arabic by Barbara Parmenter. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989. (103 pages)

Subtitled "A Moroccan Woman's Journey Toward Independence," this novella narrates the story of a young woman divorced by her Eurocentric husband who seeks a new, independent life in the traditions of Islam. Accompanied by several short stories.

Atiya, Nayra. *Khul-Khaal, Five Egyptian Women Tell Their Stories.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982. (177 pages)

A collection of five oral histories documenting the lives and struggles of five Egyptian women. Told from a first-person perspective, the women describe their difficulties and triumphs, customs and social mores, and the regular activities of daily life.

Ghalem, Ali. *A Wife for My Son.* Translated from the French by G. Kazolias. New York: Banner Press, 1988. (211 pages)

Set in modern-day Algeria, this award-winning novel narrates the story of a young woman forced into an arranged marriage. It demonstrates the pressure that society's customs can place on the individual, as well as the price one pays for breaking with tradition.

Mernissi, Fatima. *Beyond the Veil.* London: Al-Saqi Books, 1975. (198 pages)

A classic discussion of male-female relations in the Muslim world. Mernissi examines traditional sources of Islamic law regarding women and contrasts them with today's realities.

Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak. Edited by Elizabeth Fernea and Basima Bezirgan. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977. (402 pages)

An excellent collection of essays, poems, biographical sketches, and short stories documenting the historical development of Muslim women. The book's four sections examine women during the early stages of the Islamic history, the transition to modernity, the changes created by Western colonialism and Arab nationalism, and future directions.

Shaaban, Bouthaina. *Both Right and Left Handed.* Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991. (242 pages)

A compilation of interviews with women conducted by the author, focusing on women from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Algeria. The women describe their personal struggles for equality, their relationships with men, and their hopes for the future.

Women and the Family in the Middle East. Edited by Elizabeth Fernea. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985. (356 pages)

A companion volume to *Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak*, following a similar format with essays, short stories, and biographical information. Topics include health and education, work, identity, and religion and law.

Films and Videos

A Veiled Revolution. 16mm and video; 1982; 26 min.; color, Elizabeth Fernea and Marilyn Gaunt.

Analyzes the resurgence of the veil in Egyptian society, allowing women to explain their reasons for returning to traditional Islamic garb.

Some Women of Marrakech. 16mm and video; 1976; 52 min., color, Elizabeth Fernea and Marilyn Davies.

Explores the daily lives and concerns of some urban women in Marrakech, Morocco. Personal interviews allow the women to voice their own opinions and ideas about their society and its future.

Central Asia, Past and Present

Lesson Plan
Central Asia Past and Present

Since their independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1991, the countries of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkemenistan, and Uzbekistan—have faced a host of challenges as they seek to define their political systems, economies, and national identities.

Like Western colonial powers elsewhere in the world, the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union disrupted local practices and systems when they took control of Central Asia—then known as Turkistan (land of the Turks)—in the nineteenth century. After World War I, the Soviets split Turkistan into five smaller republics. They mandated Russian as the official language, changed the alphabets used to write local languages, repressed religious observance, and exploited the region's natural resources to the fullest extent.

Among the factors which will influence the course these nations ultimately take are the region's historical links with neighboring peoples, particularly in the Middle East. Much of Central Asia's population is Turkic and ethnically related to the Turks of Turkey. Others are ethnically Iranian. Most of the Turkic and non-Turkic segments of the population are Muslim; some converted as early as the eighth century A.D. during the initial Arab conquests of the region. Although religious observance was periodically forbidden at various times under Russian rule, the Central Asian people have retained their Muslim identity. Today, a number of Muslim countries are seeking to build ties with Central Asia on the basis of their common religious heritage.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Name the countries of Central Asia, locate them on a map, and explain the process by which they were formed
- Identify the major ethnic groups that inhabit Central Asia
- Discuss the historical, cultural, and religious links between Central Asia and the Middle East
- Discuss Central Asia's colonial experience and compare and contrast it with that of Arab countries
- Identify the major challenges facing the newly independent countries of Central Asia and discuss alternative courses of action they might pursue
- Explain the environmental disaster that characterizes the Aral Sea, identify contributing factors, and discuss possible solutions

Classroom Exercises and Activities

♦ Distribute copies of the essay "Central Asia, Past and Present." Also distribute the map of Central Asia that appears on page 37. The following discussion questions focus on the essay's main themes and further the lesson objectives outlined above.

1. Discuss the meaning of the word "geostrategic" (students may want to look the word up in the dictionary first). In what way might Central Asia have been geostrategically important to the Iranian Sessanian Empire? To the Arabs? To the Mongols? To the Russians? Has the region's importance as perceived by others changed over time? How? Discuss the reasons other countries might have for wanting to strengthen their ties with the newly independent Central Asian states.

2. Central Asia's earliest inhabitants were

Iranian peoples, and for a long time, the region was associated with Persia and considered part of the Persian world. Explain the course of events that resulted in Central Asia's predominantly Turkish nature. What do the Tajiks—descendants of the earlier Iranian peoples—have in common with the Iranians of today? What do the Tajiks have in common with the Central Asian Turks? Which bonds do you think are stronger? Explain your answers.

3. Many analysts of the Soviet Union expected that Central Asia would be the first region to secede from the USSR. In actual fact, it was the last region to accept independence. Discuss how Soviet policies and practices in Central Asia might have contributed to the reluctance of the region's people to declare independence. In what ways might Central Asian countries experience greater difficulties today than they did under Soviet rule? In what ways might conditions improve?

4. Some scholars have referred to the independence of Central Asia as the last in a series of "decolonizations" that have occurred in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Discuss the characteristics of colonialism; does Russian and then Soviet control of Central Asia fit this description? In what ways does the Soviet colonization of Central Asia parallel Western European colonization of the Arab world? (Think about Algeria, which the French declared a part of France, and about French and British mandates in the Fertile Crescent.) In what ways does it differ?

5. Think about the major challenges facing Central Asian countries today; consider political, economic, and social issues. Discuss any apparent relationship between the problems facing Central Asia and Russian/Soviet policies there. Alternatively, to what extent are these problems ones that any newly independent country would face? In explaining your answers, contrast and compare the situation in Central Asia with that of other newly independent countries in other parts of the world over the past fifty years.

♦ Photocopy and distribute the trade route map on page 36. The following discussion questions are based on the map and assume that students have read the essay "Central Asia, Past and Present."

1. Locate the "silk roads" depicted on the map. Where did they begin? To where did they extend? Where is Central Asia along this route? Explain how Central Asia's location along the major east-west trade routes affected the prosperity of its people; consider economic factors as well as political, cultural, and intellectual factors.

2. Arabs and then Europeans established sea routes that competed with the silk roads. Locate these sea routes on the map. What appears to be the most direct route from China to Europe? Which route do you think was the fastest? Consider the various factors that would have been involved in transporting cargo along the two different routes. Why do you think the sea route ultimately prevailed? Discuss what the decline of the silk roads meant for the people of Central Asia.

♦ Distribute the alphabet chart on page 35. Before discussing the questions below, ask students to write a simple sentence in English. Then ask them to write the *same* sentence phoenetically, using the Cyrillic and Arabic alphabets. Ask students to exchange transliterations and read each others' sentences. (Please note that only the independent positions of the Arabic letters has been provided. To write Arabic correctly, the letters must be connected, and their shape changes depending on their positions in the word. This requires a knowledge of Arabic beyond that necessary for the purposes of this exercise.)

1. What difficulties did you face in trying to write and read your language using an alphabet different than the one to which you're accustomed? Were you able to reproduce the English pronunciations *exactly*? If not, why not? Are there letters in Cyrillic and/or Arabic that you might never use in transliterating English words?

Central Asia is not part of the Arab world. However, it shares historical links with the Arab world and the rest of the Middle East, and the region's colonial experience parallels that of some Arab countries. In light of current world attention on Central Asia and the paucity of curriculum resources on this region, AMIDEAST is devoting this issue of *Arab World Almanac* to Central Asia.

Teachers may wish to refer to the previous *Arab World Almanac* issue on "The Arab World and Europe's Age of Discovery" for a more detailed discussion of the sea routes dominated by the Arabs, and to the issue on "Colonialism in the Arab World."

Please note that in the alphabet chart, only the independent forms of the Arabic letters are provided. To write Arabic correctly, the letters must be connected, and their shape changes depending on their position in the word. This requires a knowledge of Arabic beyond that necessary for the purposes of this exercise.

2. As explained in the essay "Central Asia, Past and Present," the Soviets twice mandated a change in the alphabet used by the Central Asians: from Arabic to Roman and then Cyrillic. What did the Soviets hope to achieve by doing this? To what extent do you think they were successful?

3. Now that you have confronted the problem of writing your language using an unfamiliar alphabet, discuss the practical effects for the Central Asian people of the Soviet-mandated changes in the alphabet. Think about education, media, commercial activity, etc.

♦ The chart on page 38 provides some basic information about the Central Asian countries. The exercise below is based on this data.

1. Rank the five Central Asian states in order of total land area (largest to smallest). Rank them in order of population. Do you see any correlation between your two lists? Now calculate the population density for each country (divide the total population by the total land area). Which country is the most densely populated? Which the least?

2. Consider the major natural resources of each country (note that agricultural resources are not listed, but students might want to keep them in mind). Which are commercially valuable? Strategically valuable? Discuss how the presence of these natural resources might affect these countries in terms of their economic development, environmental conditions, political relationships, etc.

3. Review the ethnic composition of each Central Asian country. Would you characterize them as homogenous or heterogenous? What explanations can you give for this extensive intermingling of peoples (consider the region's history, including the Soviet division of the former Turkistan into five separate republics)? Discuss the possible impact of such heterogenous populations on the development of national identities. How might related ethnic communities outside Central Asia (Kazakhs in Russia and China, Kyrgyz in China, Tajiks in Afghanistan, Turkmen in Iran, Syria, and Iraq) influence events in the region? Think about other ethnically heterogenous countries in the world; discuss what their experiences might imply for Central Asia.

♦ On page 39 is a brief summary of the environmental disaster that has befallen the Aral Sea. Page 40 contains a flow chart detailing some of the causes and interrelationships of the region's environmental problems. Distribute these two pages to students.

1. Study the chain of events that has led to the environmental disaster surrounding the Aral Sea. To what extent do you think the results are reversable? Discuss possible solutions to these environmental problems. Think about whether the actions you suggest would address the *causes* of the problem, or just its *symptoms*.

2. The international community is concerned about the serious environmental effects stemming from the degredation of the Aral Sea, and a number of international groups are researching possible solutions. Suppose a plan is developed that will, over 25 years, restore the Aral to its former size and water quality and regenerate the agricultural land of Central Asia. Assume that to be successful, this plan requires that agricultural production in the region be reduced to 90% of its present level for the full 25-year period. Discuss the possible reactions of the Central Asian people to this plan. Do you think they would agree to implement it? Explain your answers.

3. Identify environmental disasters elsewhere in the world, including the United States. Are the conditions and/or activities that caused them still continuing? Who decides at what point the negative long-term effects of our actions outweigh the short-term benefits?

Central Asia, Past and Present

by Robert Hurd

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1991 came as a great surprise to the entire world. Beginning with the failed coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August and ending with the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States in December, the world witnessed the dissolution of a global superpower and its rebirth as a collection of independent nations. Perhaps no region of the former Soviet Union was as unprepared for independence as the five republics of Central Asia.

The new countries of Central Asia are now struggling with the process of defining themselves as nations and establishing their place in the world. Central Asia's history is intertwined with those of neighboring peoples, including Persians, Arabs, and Turks. These historical bonds will be factors as the new countries of Central Asia seek to define their national identities.

The Region and Its People

As its name suggests, Central Asia lies in the middle of the Eurasian continent, with Russia to the north and west, China and Mongolia to the east, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent to the south. Central Asia consists of five countries whose boundaries were established during the first decade of Soviet rule: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Most of the indigenous population of Central Asia is Turkic, and before the Soviets subdivided the region, it was collectively known as Turkistan ("the land of the Turks").

The Turkic[1] people have their origins in the steppes north of present-day China. They first moved into Central Asia in the sixth century A.D. Today, there are four major Turkic peoples in Central Asia, the largest of which is the Uzbeks, followed in number by the Kazakhs, Turkmen, and Kyrgyz.[2] The Turkmen are more closely related to the Turks of Turkey than are any of the other Turkic groups in Central Asia. All of the Turkic peoples in Central Asia are Muslim. Some converted to Islam after the establishment of Arab rule in the eighth century, others only within the past 200 years.

Central Asia's non-Turkic people come from a variety of different backgrounds and include Muslims and non-Muslims. The largest Muslim group is the Tajiks, who are ethnically Iranian[3] and speak a language closely related to Persian (*Farsi*). They converted to Islam beginning with the initial Arab conquests of the region in the seventh century. Two of Central Asia's most famous cities—Samarkand and Bukhara—have long had significant Tajik populations; both now lie in Uzbekistan. The remaining non-Turkish Muslim peoples of Central Asia include smaller communities of Arabs, Kurds, Afghans, Pamiris, and Baluchis.

Most of the non-Turkic, non-Muslim people of Central Asia are Russians. Millions of Russians were resettled in Central Asia during the reigns of Josef Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev to facilitate the region's incorporation into the Soviet Union. Russians came to hold many of the region's important political positions as well as most of the skilled jobs. Central Asia's independence has created difficulties for these Russians as well as for the Central Asians.

Central Asia before the Nineteenth Century

Central Asia's location at a crossroads of civilizations created numerous opportunities for contact with—and control by—foreign powers. The earliest records indicate that the Achaemenids of Persia first conquered the region in 559 B.C., building an empire consisting of modern-day Iran, Iraq, parts of Central Asia, and the Caucasus Mountains. When Alexander the Great overthrew the Achaemenids some two hundred years later, the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand had already been established as important centers

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AMIDEAST gratefully acknowledges the contributions of David Nalle in the preparation of this essay. Mr. Nalle is a consultant specializing in Central Asian affairs.

1. It is important to distinguish between the words "Turkic" and "Turkish." Turkic refers to speakers of Altaic languages such as Uzbek, Tatar, Azeri, etc. Turkish specifically designates the people, language, and culture of modern Turkey. Turkish is a Turkic language.

2. Several smaller communities of Turkic people also live in Central Asia, including the Uighurs, Karakalpaks, Tartars, and Azeris. There are also Kazakh and Kyrgyz communities in the Xinjiang province of western China.

3. The word "Iranian" refers to speakers of the Indo-Iranian language family, and includes such peoples as the Pamiris, Tajiks, Persians, and Soghdians. "Persian" refers to an inhabitant of Iran or a speaker of the Persian language (*Farsi*).

along the trade routes between China, Europe, and the Middle East.

These trade routes were first developed between Central Asia and China by Chinese merchants who brought silk to the region in exchange for horses and commercial goods. As the trade routes expanded into Europe and the Middle East, they became known as the "silk roads," although spices were also an important trading commodity. In addition to trade, important technological innovations were transmitted via the silk roads; the Central Asians learned such skills as well-digging from the Chinese and glass-making from the Roman Empire.

During the fourth century A.D., the Sessanian Empire in Iran extended its rule into southern Central Asia, seizing control of the silk trade that passed through the key caravan city of Merv, now located in modern-day Turkmenistan. Sessanian authority predominated until the sixth century, when large numbers of Turkic people began to migrate to the north and east from their homelands in the steppes. This was the first in a series of massive Turkic migrations which would have a profound impact upon the history of the Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

The Turkic people had taken full control of Central Asia's major cities and trade routes by A.D. 565. The interaction of Persians and other Iranian peoples with the Turks led to a mingling of cultures; many of the Iranian groups adopted Turkic languages, and some of the formerly nomadic Turkic groups became sedentary under the influence of the Iranians.

The next century saw the emergence of Islam and the subsequent Arab conquests of Iran and Central Asia. The Caliph Umar,[4] second successor to the Prophet Muhammad, challenged the Sessanian Empire and ultimately chased the emperor into Central Asia in A.D. 650. Shortly after the emperor's death in Merv a year later, the Arabs had advanced all the way up to the Amu Darya (the Amu River), known in the West as the Oxus. They then invaded what they called "the land beyond the river," or in Arabic, *mawarannahr*, a geographic label that is still used in Uzbekistan today. It was not until early in the next century that the Arabs were able to assert firm control over the *mawarannahr*. Qutayba ibn Muslim, an outstanding Arab general and administrator, conquered Bukhara and Samarkand in A.D. 709 and later crossed the Syr Darya (Syr River, or Jaxartes) to take Tashkent, which is today the Uzbek capital and Central Asia's largest city.

In A.D. 751, an Arab-led army marched out to meet a Chinese expeditionary force that had crossed the mountains in the east. The defeat of that Chinese army at the Battle of Talas determined, historians say, that Central Asia would remain a part of the Western rather than the Eastern cultural world. More immediately, though, the capture at Talas of Chinese silkweaving and papermaking specialists helped increase the prominence of Central Asia. Samarkand soon became a center for the craft of papermaking, previously unknown in the West, and silks woven in the Arab world began to rival the imported Chinese product.

The Islamic religion was the chief legacy of the Arab presence in Central Asia, and it was well established there by the tenth century. Central Asia became an important part of the Muslim world, producing a number of famous scholars who made great contributions to the sciences as well as in religious studies. Foremost among the scientists was Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna, who was born in Bukhara in A.D. 980. His books on medicine were used as textbooks in medieval Europe, and he also wrote works in Arabic on theology and philosophy. Other Central Asian scholars include al-Biruni, who made important contributions to geology, mathematics, and physics, and Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, who produced one of the first works on algebra.[5] Among the most famous Islamic scholars was Muhammad ibn Ismail Abu Abdullah (also known as Imam Bukhari) who compiled what is still considered the most authentic collection of *Hadith*.[6]

The tenth century also saw another wave of Turkic migrants out of Mongolia. Among these were the Seljuk Turks, who became

4. "Caliph" comes from the Arabic word *khalifah*, meaning "successor" or "viceroy." The caliph was both the spiritual and temporal leader of the Islamic state. After the first four caliphs, the position was institutionalized as a dynastic office, controlled first by the Umayyad dynasty and then the Abbasid dynasty.

5. "Algebra" comes from the Arabic word *al-jabr*, meaning "reduction;" this was the term al-Khwarizmi used for his process of solving quadratic equations.

6. *Hadith* are the collected sayings and instructions of the Prophet Muhammad. Together with the Qur'an, they form the basis of Islamic law.

the protectors of the Abbasid Caliphate until the coming of the Mongols in the mid-1200s. The Mongol invasion, under the direction of Genghis Khan and later his sons and grandsons, was the last great migration of nomadic peoples out of the Mongolian steppes. It was composed of the Mongols themselves and the various Turkic nomads who joined their campaigns along the way. In their brief but fierce campaigns in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, the Mongols destroyed the major cities of Central Asia and ended the reign of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad.

Four Mongol states then emerged, including the Il-Khans in Iraq and Iran, the Golden Horde in Southern Russia around the Volga River basin, and the Chaghatai state in the heart of Central Asia. A fourth great Mongol state, which later became the Yuan Dynasty, was established in China under Genghis' grandson Kublai Khan. Under the Chaghatai state, Central Asia began to rebuild and repair the damage of the Mongol invasion.

Internal struggles for power limited the success of the Chaghatai state. Out of this turmoil, a new Turco-Mongol leader arose. This was Timur, best known in the West as Tamurlane, or Timur the Lame, in reference to his limp. Born near Samarkand around 1330 to the chief of a small tribe, his conquests stretched from the city of Delhi in the Indian subcontinent to Asia Minor, where he defeated the forces of the young Ottoman Empire in 1402. Timur made the city of Samarkand his capital, and he spared no expense in rebuilding and beautifying the city. Artists, scholars, and craftsmen from conquered lands were resettled in Samarkand to mark the city as a center of the arts and learning. Samarkand's intellectual heritage influenced scholars in the Arab world and in Europe. Its legacy includes important books on Islam by Saad al-Din Taftazani, propagation of the powerful Nasqshbandiyya Sufi order, and most importantly, the astronomical observations of Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg. With his gigantic observatory in Samarkand, Ulugh Beg was able to make precise astronomical calculations which were later translated into Latin and influenced the work of Tycho Brahe and Nicholas Copernicus.[7] In addition to his patronage of the arts, Timur's aggressive conquests resulted in the unification of all of Central Asia under Islam.

Timur's successors, known as the Timurids, ruled for almost a hundred years from their capital of Herat, now the major city of western Afghanistan. It was a greatly diminished empire, but the Timurids are particularly noted for presiding over a flowering of the Persian arts: poetry, calligraphy, miniature painting, architecture, and music. Their empire collapsed shortly after 1500 when it was invaded by the Uzbeks—a Turkic tribe that had settled north of the Aral Sea.

Thereafter, Central Asia entered a long period of political decline. This was partially caused by the collapse of the trade routes through Central Asia after the establishment of alternative routes, as well as by China's attempts to isolate itself from the outside world. At the same time, the Safavid Empire[8] came to power in Persia, unifying all of the Iranian plateau and converting the population to Shi'a Islam. The Central Asians were Sunni Muslims, and bitter religious differences between the two groups resulted in the closing of the main route to Mecca and hastened the decline of Persian cultural influence in the region.[9]

Meanwhile, Bukhara became known as a major center of Islamic studies and was called "the pillar of Islam" because of the large number of scholars it produced. The influence of Sufism expanded in Central Asia as well as to the south and east. Sufism is a form of Islamic mysticism which emphasizes a believer's personal relationship with God and the importance of spiritual purity. Several Sufi orders, known as brotherhoods, became popular in the region. Each brotherhood was centered around a shrine dedicated to its founder, and these shrines became important pilgrimage sites for the local population, in part because of the lack of access to Mecca. The Sufi orders were instrumental in converting Central Asia's nomadic population to Islam.

7. Nicholas Copernicus was a Polish astronomer who was the first major scientist to propose a heliocentric (sun-centered) model of our solar system. His model correctly determined the circular orbits of the planets and their relative distances from each other. While Tycho Brahe did not believe in a heliocentric planetary system, he—like Ulugh Beg—took extensive and highly accurate observations of the stars and planets. This data later provided proof for the work of Johannes Kepler, who devised the first formulas correctly predicting planetary orbits around the sun.

8. The Safavid dynasty ruled Iran from 1501 to 1732. It was the first Muslim empire to unite all of modern-day Iran into a single state. Its founder, Shah Ismail, established Shi'a Islam as the official state religion.

9. Approximately 10–15% of all Muslims belong to the Shi'a branch of Islam. The split between Sunni and Shi'a reflects a disagreement over the selection of caliph. The Shi'a felt that the leader of the Islamic community should be a blood relative of the Prophet, while the Sunni argued that the Prophet's successor should be chosen on the basis of merit. Today, Sunni and Shi'a also differ in the nature of their religious hierarchies and in their practice of certain rituals.

Central Asia Under Russian and Soviet Influence

The gradual decline of the Central Asian kingdoms gave the growing Russian empire new opportunities for expansion. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Tsar Ivan the Terrible annexed two Muslim kingdoms along the Volga river. These were the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan. The Russians implemented policies later continued by their Soviet successors, including the suppression of Islam and the importation of large numbers of Russian peasants. Motivated by the desire to spread the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, they destroyed mosques and schools throughout the area and tried to forcibly convert the population.

In Central Asia, the Russians first penetrated the area of modern-day Kazakhstan. By 1865, they had reached as far as Tashkent, the capital of modern-day Uzbekistan. The Russians established Tashkent as the capital of the General Governorship of Turkistan, from which almost all of Central Asia eventually came to be administered. Russian domination brought significant changes. Large numbers of Russian citizens moved into the region, especially into Kazakhstan. New transportation systems were developed, including the Trans-Caspian and Orenburg-Tashkent railroads. Extensive cotton cultivation was initiated throughout the region's fertile lands; Russian demand for cotton increased dramatically during the American Civil War, when a Union blockade halted exports from the Confederate states.

The Central Asians resented their treatment under Russian rule. The General Governorship denied them citizenship, relegating them to inferior legal status. The Russians generally lived in separate communities and viewed the Central Asians as backwards and uneducated. Tensions between the two groups inspired a number of religiously motivated revolts throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century. This was followed in 1916 by a large-scale uprising, which was precipitated by Russian plans to draft Central Asians for noncombat military service but actually represented the culmination of years of anger and frustration against the Russian occupation.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 brought the Russian Empire to an end. At first, the Central Asians expected the rise of Communism to improve their position. However, the Bolsheviks doubted the loyalty of the Central Asians, and they refused to allow Muslim participation in the region's new government. Parts of southern Central Asia declared their independence and attempted to secede, but government forces brutally suppressed this movement.

Once the Bolsheviks had solidified their power, they began to reorganize Central Asia. By 1920, the major independence movements had been crushed although pockets of resistance—called *Basmachi*, or "bandits," by the Soviets—continued to hold out until the 1930's. The area of the General Governorship was reorganized as the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic under the direct control of the larger Russian republic. Between 1924 and 1936, the Turkistan republic was divided into five smaller republics, each a separate entity within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Soviet interest in Central Asia was due largely to the need for raw materials located there, including cotton, oil and natural gas, and various minerals. Few of Central Asia's resources were actually processed within its borders. Cotton was delivered to textile factories in other republics, iron and other metals were refined outside the region, oil and gas were transported elsewhere, and even the electricity produced in Central Asia supplied power for other republics. The Soviet's intensive exploitation of Central Asia's natural resources has resulted in serious environmental problems, including the drastic shrinking of the Aral Sea, pesticide contamination, and radiation poisoning.

The alternating promotion and discouragement of various identities became an important part of Soviet policy in Central Asia. For example, during the 1930s, the Soviets discouraged certain aspects of indigenous culture that would inhibit the region's ties with Russia and the larger Soviet Union. Russian became the official language, and the Russian population in Central Asia made few attempts to learn the local languages.

The Soviets dictated changes in the Central Asian alphabets twice. In 1926, the alphabet for the Turkic and Tajik languages was changed from Arabic to Latin, and then to Cyrillic in 1938.

The Soviets also implemented policies to reduce or eliminate religious loyalties. During the period 1920–28, they were relatively lenient in this regard. They declared Friday a day of rest for Muslim religious observance, allowed Muslim religious courts to try both civil and criminal cases, and permitted the traditional religious endowments—known in Arabic as *waqfs*—to support mosques and other religious needs. However, after 1928, the Soviets began a brutal campaign of religious oppression. Religious courts were closed, the waqfs were seized, religious officials were imprisoned, and all pilgrimages to Mecca were stopped. Only those mosques under official state control were permitted to function.

These and other forms of religious persecution continued until 1940, when Stalin's need to build support for the Soviet war effort in World War II led to a lifting of restrictions on religious practice. A limited number of pilgrims were allowed to travel to Mecca, and greater public religious observance was allowed. Stalin also established four spiritual directorates as official state-sanctioned representatives of Islamic learning. One was located in Tashkent and served Central Asia. These relatively liberal policies continued until 1960, when Nikita Khrushchev began a brief but vigilant campaign against all religious activity. Once again, mosques and schools were closed, but the level of persecution began to generate public sympathy, and the government lifted some of its restrictions in response.

A direct consequence of Soviet religious persecution was the creation of separate public and private spheres of Islam. Public Islam resided with the state-sponsored mosques and religious authorities. These authorities and institutions were instruments of the Soviet state and were used to disseminate propaganda, but they nevertheless helped preserve the scholastic traditions of Islam and the role of Islamic scholars and judges. Through cooperation with the Soviets, they safeguarded certain aspects of Islam—particularly the educational system—from further disruption.

In contrast, private Islam existed in opposition to the Soviet state. It was composed essentially of a series of underground mosques, schools, and Sufi brotherhoods. Extremely conservative in nature, it was centered around various tribal, village, and ethnic organizations. While public Islam preserved historical legacy, private Islam contributed to the perpetuation of individuals' Muslim identities.

Central Asia After Independence

Under the reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, the republics of the Soviet Union began to acquire greater control over their internal affairs. In some republics, this encouraged the drive for independence and separation from the Soviet Union. While the Central Asian republics began to enjoy greater cultural, economic, and religious freedoms, they did not actively campaign for independence. In part, this was because most of Central Asia's leaders were conservative members of the Communist party who saw Moscow's reforms as an opportunity to develop their own power bases. Unlike the leaders of the European republics, Central Asian leaders were able to strengthen their positions by supporting educational and religious institutions, promoting various ethnic arts and cultures, and advancing the use of indigenous languages. This helped them establish political legitimacy and discourage most potential sources of opposition. The Communist Party was officially banned in the newly independent states, but in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, former Communist Party officials were able to maintain power by simply changing the name of the party. The strong presence of ex-Communist officials in the new governments has limited broader political participation, and opposition parties are often banned or harassed.

Islam in Central Asia is probably not now strong enough to serve as a vehicle for spontaneous political organization. Historically, the region and its people have been located

33

at the periphery of the Muslim world; this is particularly true of the Kazakhs. As a result of this relative isolation, compounded by seventy years of Soviet interference in religious affairs, most Central Asians lack a secure knowledge of Islamic law and history. Even the more radical Islamists say that years of education would be required before Central Asians could implement systems of Islamic government. In addition to its primary role as a religion, Islam will surely continue to serve as a major element in the cultural identity of Central Asians. If economic and other problems continue, attempts may be made to use Islam as a vehicle for political mobilization.

Economic problems remain at the forefront of Central Asia's concerns. The region's population is growing at a rapid rate, as high as three percent annually some areas.[10] Unemployment is rising. Under the Soviet system, Central Asian workers received minimal education and training, leaving them ill-prepared to independently manage the region's industries. The most skilled segment of Central Asian society is the ethnic Russians, and although the Central Asians would like the Russians to leave, their economies would instantly suffer as a result.

The new countries of Central Asia continue to be economically dependent on Russia. The Russian ruble is the currency used by all five Central Asian states, and Russia is the economic center of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nonetheless, Russia's prominent position has not prevented other countries from making economic overtures to the new Central Asian nations. With their supplies of oil, natural gas, and other precious resources, the countries of Central Asia could quickly become sought-after trading partners. In return for their resources, the Central Asians hope to obtain economic and developmental assistance. Israel has already provided assistance in repairing irrigation systems in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, preferring payment in raw materials rather than rubles. Similar arrangements may be made with the Iranians, who have the expertise to help Central Asia develop its oil industry. In addition, all five Central Asian countries have recently become members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, originally formed between Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan. The Central Asian states have also formed a common market amongst themselves—the United States of Central Asia—which will include common trade and taxation policies as well as unified efforts to save the Aral Sea.

As the Central Asians face the challenge of reorganizing their societies, they are examining the societies of neighboring countries, trying to determine whether similar models will work at home. Most Central Asians favor the model of Turkey: a strong secular government with respect for cultural and religious identities. In addition, Central Asia's Turkic peoples are ethnically related to the Turks of Turkey. For its part, Turkey is seeking to establish strong political and economic relations with Central Asia.

Islam serves as another bridge to the outside world, especially to the Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Several of these countries have provided economic aid to assist in the revival of Islamic sentiment. These funds, primarily from Saudi Arabia, have already had a dramatic effect. In 1989 there were only 160 mosques in Central Asia, while today there are over 5,000; for a time, as many as ten new mosques were opening every day. Saudi Arabia has shipped large numbers of Qur'ans to Central Asia and has sponsored pilgrims to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Central Asian students are also being sent abroad for religious education, to Pakistan as well as to Middle Eastern countries.

The countries of Central Asia face a troubled and complicated future. Even with the help of their more prosperous neighbors, economic development will be difficult. Political tensions and environmental problems threaten to strain relations between the five new nations. The next decade will bring many challenges, but for the first time in centuries, the people of Central Asia have the opportunity to meet these challenges on their own terms.

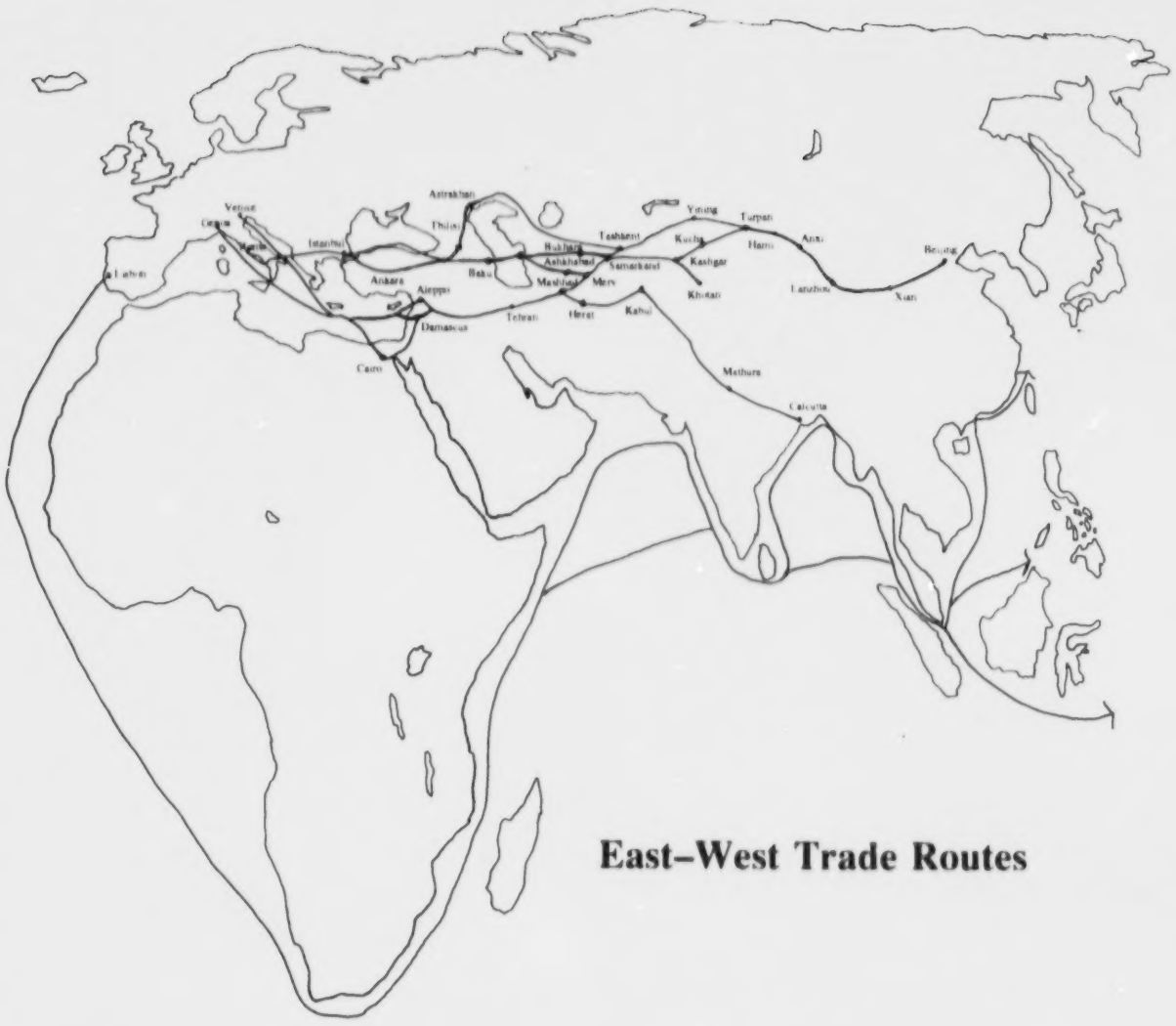
10. This rate is comparatively high. The average annual population growth rate is 1.7% worldwide, although it varies considerably among countries. In the Middle East and Africa, the annual population growth rates tend to be significantly higher than this, while in high-income industrialized countries like the United States, Europe, and Japan, they are much lower.

Cyrillic		Arabic	
Letters	English sound	Letters	English sound
А а	*a*, as in f*a*ther	ا	*a*, as in s*a*t or c*au*ght
Б б	b	ب	b
В в	v	ت	t
Г г	*g*, as in *g*et	ث	*th*, as in mou*th*
Д д	d	ج	*j*, as in *j*ar
Е е	*ye*, as in *ye*s	ح	hard *h*, as in *h*ot*
Ё ё	yo	خ	guttural *kh**
Ж ж	*zsh*, as in plea*s*ure	د	d
З з	z	ذ	*th*, as in *th*at
И и	*ee*, as in m*ee*t	ر	r
Й й	*y*, as in bo*y*	ز	z
К к	k	س	s
Л л	*l*, as in *l*et	ش	sh
М м	m	ص	*s*, as in *s*orry*
Н н	n	ض	*d*, as in *d*ot*
О о	stressed, *o* as in p*o*t	ط	*ta*, as in *ta*ught*
	unstressed, *a* as in b*a*ron	ظ	*th*, as in o*th*er
П п	p	ع	consonant made by saying *ah*
Р р	rolling *r*		and quickly tensing the throat*
С с	*s*, as in *s*ix	غ	guttural *gh*, as in *gh*oul*
Т т	t	ف	f
У у	*oo*, as in f*oo*d	ق	*q*, as in *qu*ail*
Ф ф	f	ك	k
Х х	guttural *kh**	ل	l
Ц ц	*ts*, as in ca*ts*	م	m
Ч ч	*ch*, as in *ch*urch	ن	n
Ш ш	*sh*, as in *sh*ine	ه	*h*, as in *h*appy
Щ щ	ssh*	و	*w*, as in *w*ork
Ъ ъ	no sound#		or *oo*, as in s*oo*n
Ы ы	glottal e*	ي	*y*, as in *y*es
Ь ь	no sound+		or *ee*, as in s*ee*m
Э э	*e*, as in p*e*t	◌ُ	short *u*, as in p*u*t (placed above the consonant it follows)
Ю ю	*yu*, as in *yu*le	◌َ	short *a* or *e*, as in b*e*d (placed above the consonant it follows)
Я я	*ya*, as in *ya*rd	◌ِ	short *i*, as in h*i*t (placed below the consonant it follows)

* No direct English equivalent; closest English approximation given

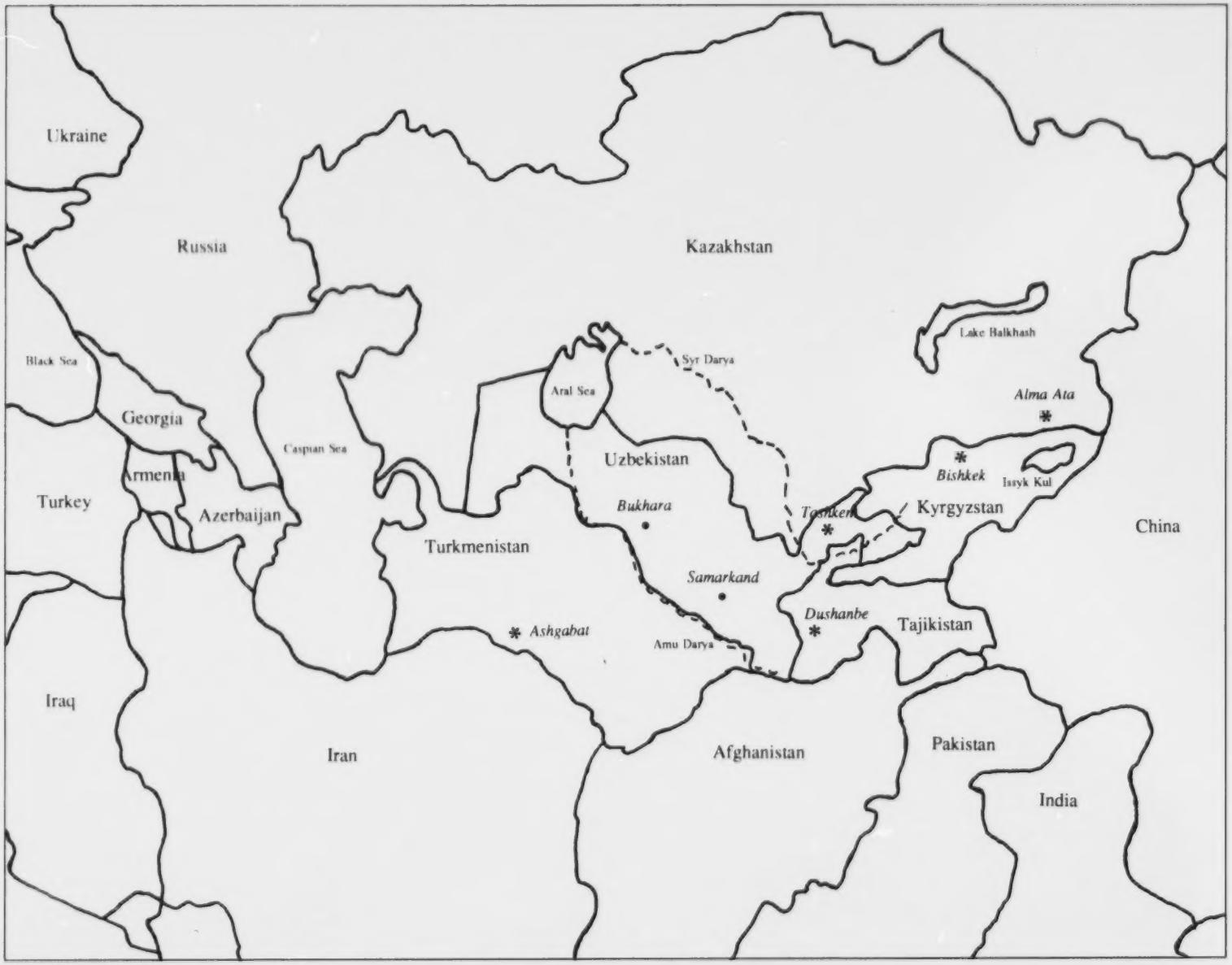
\# Creates a syllabic break in the word (after "hard" consonants)

\+ Creates a syllabic break in the word (after "soft" consonants)



East–West Trade Routes

Central Asia Today



42

43

Land and Population in Central Asia

Country	Total Land Area (square miles)	Natural Resources	Population[1]	Ethnic Composition
Kazakhstan	1,049,200	oil, lead, iron, copper,tungsten, zinc, uranium, manganese	16,463,000	40% Kazakh[2] 38% Russian 6% German 16% other (Uighurs, Koreans, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Ukrainian, and Kyrgyz)
Kyrgyzstan	76,642	gold, mercury, uranium, zinc, lead	4,258,000	52% Kyrgyz[3] 22% Russian 13% Uzbek 13% other (Tajiks, Kazakhs, Germans, and Ukrainians)
Tajikistan	54,019	coal,uranium, mica, gold	5,090,000	62% Tajik[4] 24% Uzbek 8% Russian 6% other (Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Kazakhs)
Turkmenistan	188,417	oil, natural gas, coal, gypsum, barite	3,512,000	72% Turkmen[5] 9% Russian 9% Ukrainian 10% other (Uzbeks and Kazakhs)
Uzbekistan	172,700	coal, sulphur, copper, oil, gold, uranium	19,808,000	71% Uzbek[6] 8% Russian 5% Tajik 16% other (Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen)

[1]All figures based on 1989 Soviet census.

[2]In addition, there are over 500,000 Kazakhs in the Southern Ural Mountains of Russia and 1,000,000 in the Xinjiang province of China.

[3]In addition, slightly over 100,000 Kyrgyz reside in the Xinjiang province of China.

[4]In addition, approximately 3,000,000 Tajiks live in neighboring Afghanistan.

[5]More than 3,000,000 Turkmen live outside of Central Asia. Most reside in Iran, but there are also small communities in Syria and Iraq.

[6]The 1989 census incorporates the Karakalpaks into the figures provided for Uzbeks.

44

The Aral Sea in Crisis

The plight of the Aral Sea represents one of the greatest man-made environmental disasters of all time. Once occupying an area of 26,000 square miles, the Aral was the fourth largest sea in the world. Today, it has shrunk to approximately 15,500 square miles, and it has dropped from fourth to seventh place in size. Scientists estimate that by the year 2000, the Aral will be reduced to a series of lakes covering a mere 2,000 square miles.

No single plan or project was responsible for the shrinking of the Aral. The primary reason for the sea's destruction has been the diversion of the Aral's water supply to irrigate surrounding farmland. Central Asia's two major rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, have traditionally flown into the Aral after their long journeys from the Pamir and Tien Shan mountains in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and western China. Along the way, these rivers pass through all five Central Asian countries. They play an essential part in Central Asian agriculture, and they also supply drinking water and sanitation to a great number of people.

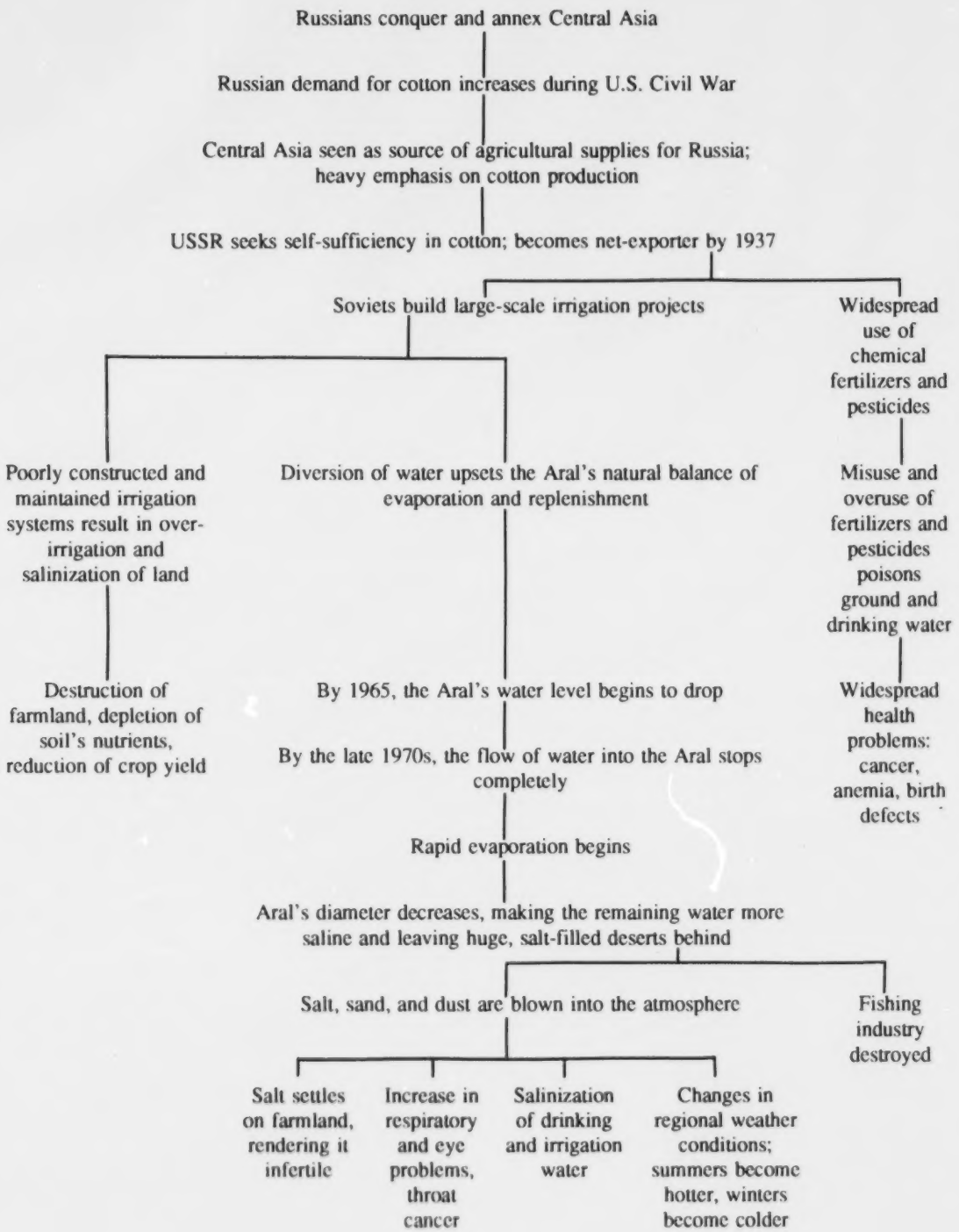
Irrigated agriculture in Central Asia dates back to ancient times; canals dating back to B.C. 4000 have been found in present-day Turkmenistan. However, under Russian and Soviet rule, the nature and scale of agricultural production in Central Asia changed drastically. The Soviets saw the region as a supply of raw materials and agricultural goods. Central Asia produced 95% of the USSR's cotton, the cultivation of which depended almost completely on water from the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. In order to achieve high production levels, the Soviets used heavy machinery to build vast irrigation systems. Large canals were constructed, including the gigantic Karal Kum canal which stretches 850 miles through the Karal Kum desert along the border between Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. In addition, high concentrations of chemical fertilizers and pesticides were used to boost crop yield. These innovations soon began to take their toll on the land.

The first anomalies in the region's ecosystem appeared in the early 1960s, but radical environmental effects did not appear until the 1980s. Fishing villages that once bordered the sea are now almost 40 miles from the shore. The poor construction and maintenance of irrigation systems has contributed to the salinization of large sections of farmland and has contaminated drinking water. Health problems have skyrocketed, especially among the people who live closest to the Aral.

Just before the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government began to recognize the scope of the Aral Sea disaster. With the demise of the USSR, Central Asia now faces the Aral's problems on its own. Currently, the new Central Asian governments lack both the financial resources and technical experience to effectively address the situation. Compounding the issue, agriculture remains Central Asia's largest industry, and efforts to reverse health and environmental problems will certainly reduce at least the short-term extent and intensity of agricultural activity in the region.

Increased global awareness about the environment has begun to mobilize international efforts to save the Aral. The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro focused worldwide media attention on the Aral's plight, and in his best-selling book *The Earth in Balance*, Vice-President Al Gore gave special mention to the Aral Sea crisis. Currently, international groups are working on a variety of projects. Some are seeking ways to improve Central Asia's irrigation systems, while other are searching for new and unpolluted sources of drinking water.

Steps to Environmental Crisis in Central Asia


Russians conquer and annex Central Asia
Russian demand for cotton increases during U.S. Civil War
Central Asia seen as source of agricultural supplies for Russia; heavy emphasis on cotton production
USSR seeks self-sufficiency in cotton; becomes net-exporter by 1937
Soviets build large-scale irrigation projects
Widespread use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides
Poorly constructed and maintained irrigation systems result in over-irrigation and salinization of land
Diversion of water upsets the Aral's natural balance of evaporation and replenishment
Misuse and overuse of fertilizers and pesticides poisons ground and drinking water
Destruction of farmland, depletion of soil's nutrients, reduction of crop yield
By 1965, the Aral's water level begins to drop
By the late 1970s, the flow of water into the Aral stops completely
Widespread health problems: cancer, anemia, birth defects
Rapid evaporation begins
Aral's diameter decreases, making the remaining water more saline and leaving huge, salt-filled deserts behind
Salt, sand, and dust are blown into the atmosphere
Fishing industry destroyed
Salt settles on farmland, rendering it infertile
Increase in respiratory and eye problems, throat cancer
Salinization of drinking and irrigation water
Changes in regional weather conditions; summers become hotter, winters become colder

Suggested Background References

Ellis, William. "The Aral: A Soviet Sea Lies Dying." *National Geographic*, Vol. 177, No. 2, February 1990. (pages 72-93)

Focuses on the causes and effects of the Aral Sea disaster, as well as efforts to repair the environmental damage. Features maps and full color photographs.

"Land of the Great Silk Road." *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Summer 1992. (pages 19-61)

This edition features four articles on Central Asia. Subjects include the history of the silk roads and the period before Russian conquest, the architectural legacy of Samarkand, Central Asia under Russian rule, and the emergence of an independent Central Asia. Includes a detailed reading list.

"Muslims in the USSR." *Aramco World*, Vol. 41, No. 1, January-February 1990.

An entire issue dedicated to the Muslims of Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Articles include a historical overview of Central Asia, Islam's reaction to Soviet rule, and personal travel accounts from journeys throughout the region. Features an assortment of full color photographs.

Olcott, Martha Brill. "Central Asia's Catapult to Independence." *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1992. (pages 108-130)

An excellent overview of the difficulties facing the new countries of Central Asia during their transition to independence. Special attention is given to political and economic developments, especially relations with Russia.

Rupert, James. "Dateline Tashkent: Post-Soviet Central Asia." *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1992. (pages 175-195)

An examination of the myths and realities behind the independence of Central Asia. Topics include a brief appraisal of political developments in the five new countries, the character of Islam in Central Asia, and the nature of United States foreign policy in the region.

Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation. Edited by William Fierman. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991. (328 pages)

A compilation of essays from various scholars, this book surveys the Soviet impact on Central Asia, including ethnic relationships, political and economic developments, and the status of women.

Wright, Robin. "Report From Turkestan." *The New Yorker*, Vol. 58, April 6, 1992. (pages 53-75)

Written after the author's travels throughout most of Central Asia this article reports on personal interviews with Central Asians, reflecting their fears, hopes, and dreams about independence and the future of their society.

Periodical Resources

Central Asia Monitor, RR. 2, Box 6880, Fair Haven, VT, 05743

A bimonthly publication that focuses on the five independent countries of Central Asia. Features economic and political updates, profiles of leaders and ethnic groups, as well as scholarly examinations of different problems and developments.

UmidHope, Journal of the Turkistanian American Association, 2302 West 13th Street, Ave W, Brooklyn, NY 11223

Published twice a year, this publication examines the politics as well as the culture of Central Asia. Produced by Americans of Central Asian heritage, past issues have featured profiles of political leaders and historical figures, essays on Central Asian literature, as well as regional cuisine.

Government and Democracy in the Arab World

Lesson Plan
Government & Democracy in the Arab World

"Democratic" is not among the terms most observers would use to describe the Arab world. Instead, single-party states, family monarchies, and military regimes dominate the region's political spectrum.

In contrast, early Arab and Islamic traditions embodied many democratic principles, including an egalitarian social structure, accountability between ruler and ruled, and the practice of community consensus in deciding disputes and selecting leaders. Although these principles continue to be recognized today, they have not been generally applied since the region came to be dominated by a succession of family dynasties, beginning in the middle of the seventh century.

The last of the great Islamic dynasties was the Turkish Ottoman dynasty. Its decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led Muslims to address the sources of stagnation in their societies. Some searched for solutions within the original framework and intentions of Islam, while others believed that the adoption of European institutions would lead to the same prosperity then being experienced in the West. Later, Arab nationalists seeking independence from the Europeans cited democratic principles in their calls for self-determination.

Despite historical precedents and the wisespread support of democratic ideas throughout the Arab world, stable, democratic governments have failed to develop. Contributing factors include domestic conditions as well as regional and international problems. Combined, they have created a fragile and unstable political environment which has deterred democratic reform.

The Arab people are increasingly voicing their dissatisfaction with the current state of their societies, and they are demanding change. The Islamic resurgence is in part a reflection of this dissatisfaction, but demands for secular democratic reform are also growing. Arab leaders are increasingly recognizing the imperative for popular participation in government, and several have responded by holding new elections and easing restrictions on the press and on the formation of political parties. Some view these developments as real steps towards the establishment of democracy in the region, while others consider them as attempts to win legitimacy for current regimes rather than to empower the general population.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify some of the democratic traditions practiced by the bedouin Arabs and by early Muslims

- Explain how European colonialism in the Arab world created conditions that ultimately made the development of democratic institutions more difficult

- Identify the three general patterns of government in the Arab world and discuss the characteristics of each that inhibit democratic reform

- Discuss the factors and conditions that have contributed to demands for reform among the Arab people

- Compare and contrast differing viewpoints regarding the compatibility of Islam and democracy

- Give examples of democratic reforms instituted by some Arab governments

Classroom Exercises and Activities

♦ Distribute copies of the essay "Government and Democracy in the Arab World." The following discussion questions focus on the essay's main themes and further the lesson objectives outlined above.

1. Discuss the traditions and practices of the Arab bedouin and early Muslims that were listed in the essay. How do they reflect democratic principles? Although these traditions have been incorporated into Islamic law, they are not necessarily observed in practice. What factors might have contributed to the discrepancy between theory and practice? Can you think of similar discrepancies in other major world religions?

2. Identify some of the historical conditions mentioned in the essay that gave rise to attempts at reform in the Middle East in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How do these conditions compare with those of today? Discuss the approaches to reform that have arisen in response to these conditions. In what ways are the approaches of the Islamist and secular movements similar? Different? To what extent do they share the same goals?

3. Describe how European and American influence has affected the process of state formation in the Arab world. How has it encouraged democratic reform? How has it hindered the development of democracy in the region? Give examples to support your answers.

4. List some of the obstacles to democracy mentioned in the essay. Which are beyond the ability of individual leaders or governments to address? Which result from the dominance of the state and state institutions? In what ways are citizens limited in their ability to call for political reform (consider the totalitarian state, the oil kingdom, and the multiparty state)?

5. Since before the Arab countries achieved independence, nationalists and others have been calling for democratic reform. Yet, only in the last few years have real changes in this direction been made by regional governments. Discuss possible reasons why this development is occuring now rather than ten, twenty, or thirty years ago; consider domestic, regional, and international factors. For example, how might increasing educational opportunities and higher literacy rates affect popular calls for democracy? In what ways has your own education prepared you to participate in a democratic society?

6. Some governments have responded to popular demand and liberalized their political systems through such actions as national elections, lifting restrictions on the press, and legalizing opposition political parties. These developments are viewed by some as concrete steps toward democracy, and by others as attempts merely to maintain the status quo. Discuss the validity of each perspective. Are they mutually exclusive?

♦ Distribute copies of the country profiles that appear on pages 54–57. The questions below are based on these profiles and assume that students have read or are familiar with the content of the essay "Government and Democracy in the Arab World."

1. Review the "official government type" listed for each country. What are the two most common? In theory, how would you characterize the differences between a monarchy and a republic? From what you know about various Arab countries and from the profiles provided, are the theoretical differences between republics and monarchies evident in the actual organization of Arab governments? Give examples that support your answers. Do you think the prospects for democratic reform are greater in those Arab countries categorized as republics or in those categorized as monarchies? Why?

2. Identify the various means by which current leaders have come to power in the Arab world (see the category "head of state"). What does this suggest about long-term government stability in the region? Discuss how this might affect the pros-

Information for these country profiles was compiled from the Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook 1991*, The World Bank's *World Development Report 1992*, and Duskin Publishing's *The Middle East*, 3rd edition, 1990.

pects for democratic reform.

3. The legal systems in most Arab countries are based on several different codes of law. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages this might present as people and governments alike seek to reform their political systems.

4. Identify countries with relatively high GNP per capita ($6,000 and up). What, if anything, do these countries have in common in terms of government type, suffrage, political parties, and elections? Answer the same question for countries with lower GNPs. Hypothesize about the relationship between economic prosperity, demands for democratic reform, and the predisposition of governments to liberalize the political system.

5. The essay "Government and Democracy in the Arab World" suggests that higher education levels facilitate the development of democratic institutions and practices. Do the literacy rates provided in the country profiles substantiate this hypothesis (are the countries that exhibit higher literacy rates those that have a longer or stronger record of political reform)? What factors that affect the overall literacy rate might you also want to consider? (For example, differences between urban and rural areas in both literacy and the ability to influence government policies.)

♦ On pages 58–61 is a timeline of events leading to reform in Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen. Distribute the timeline to students and allow time for them to review it before raising the questions below.

1. Identify the conditions and/or events that appear to have served as catalysts for democratic reform in the four countries listed. Which occur in more than one country? Which in only one country?

2. Identify the responses of the Algerian, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, and Yemeni governments to the conditions and events discussed in #1 above. What do you think motivated these governments to make such changes at this time? Discuss possible scenarios of what might have happened had these reforms not been instituted.

3. Discuss the relationship between a free press and the democratic process. Why is a free press considered essential for democracy to flourish? In which countries were restrictions on the press eased? In how many cases does this decision appear to have been later reversed or compromised? What incentives might a government have for restricting the press? In your opinion, would such an action ever be justifiable in a democracy?

4. In all four of the countries listed on the timeline, elections have been held recently. In each case, which parties/constituencies won a majority? What conclusions might you draw from these results regarding a) the extent to which the elections were fair, and b) the general population's desire for change?

♦ Pages 62–64 contain perspectives on democracy held by various Arab leaders and journalists. The following questions encourage students to compare and contrast these diverse views and their implications.

1. Based on the excerpt from Abu Bakr's accession speech (A), what are the responsibilities of a just Muslim leader? What obligations does the leader have towards his followers? How similar or different is this relationship between leader and people to that in a democracy?

2. Discuss the differences and similarities between the standard definition of democracy and the definition given by Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi (B). Could the United States be considered a democracy by the latter definition? Is the implementation of Qadhafi's proposed government organization sufficient to guarantee the development of a democratic system? Do you think there can be different forms of democracy? Explain your answers.

3. Other political parties in Algeria feared that if the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

won the national elections, its leaders would reverse recent moves toward democracy and rule by Islamic law. Based on the quote by FIS leader Ali Belhadj (C), do you think these fears were justified? To what extent do you find Belhadj's arguments convincing? Discuss possible reasons why the FIS attracted such a significant following.

4. Compare and contrast the views concerning Islam and democracy expressed by Ali Belhadj (C), Hassan al-Turabi (D), Fahmi Howeidi (E), and Rachid Ghannouchi (F). Consider the role of popular participation and sovereignty, the nature of governmental institutions, limits to governmental power, and the role of Islam and Muslim clerics in government. After considering these various perspectives, what generalizations can you make regarding the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Would your conclusions be similar or different concerning the compability of Christianity and Judaism with democracy?

5. King Hussein of Jordan has been one of the most vocal of Arab leaders in support of democracy. In his speech (G), he identifies a number of factors contributing to other governments' failures to reform their political systems. How do these compare with the obstacles to democracy identified in the essay "Government and Democracy in the Arab World"? To be successful, the king must address the concerns of those advocating secular reform as well as the strong Islamist segment of Jordanian society. Identify components of his speech that might have been drafted to appeal to each of these audiences.

Government and Democracy in the Arab World

by Robert Hurd

Robert Hurd is one of the editors of *Arab World Almanac*.

The editors appreciate the contributions to this essay of Dr. Susan Ziadeh, director, and Ms. Nagla El-Bassiouni, Senior Program Specialist, of AMIDEAST's Development of Democratic Institutions project.

1. It is important to distinguish between the words "Islamist" and "Islamic." While the latter is an adjective that describes something politically, culturally, or religiously related to Islam, the former is used to describe the so-called "fundamentalist" Muslims who call for a more political role for Islam in public life.

2. Hadith are the collected sayings and instructions of the Prophet Muhammad. Together with the Qur'an, the word of God as transmitted to Muhammad, they form the basis of Islamic law.

"Democratic" is not among the words most observers would choose to characterize the governments of the contemporary Arab world. Throughout the region, the basic building blocks of democracy—public accountability between ruler and ruled and the balance and sharing of power among governmental institutions—are minimal. States dominated by single parties, family monarchies, and military regimes dominate the region's political spectrum. Popular frustration over the lack of political freedoms, manifested in the rise of Islamist[1] groups and popular protests, has contributed to an increase in human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom of the press.

In contrast, historical evidence points to established traditions of democracy in the Arab world. The earliest such traditions in the region were practiced by the bedouin of pre-Islamic Arabia. These Arab nomads organized themselves according to kinship ties. An individual's loyalty was first to the family, then to the clan, and finally to the tribe. At the level of the clan and tribe, the system of government was highly egalitarian. The group leader was chosen on the basis of merit and was considered to be the "first among equals." Decisions affecting the livelihood of the group required participation from everyone involved, and the leader had no authority to impose his will. Failure to fulfill his responsibilities would result in the leader's removal and his replacement by the most worthy successor.

In cities such as Mecca, where the Prophet Muhammad was born in A.D. 570, urban society had become more stratified than that of the bedouin. Mecca had developed into an important center of religious and commercial activity, and the wealth gained through trade and commerce broke the egalitarian relationships among families, clans, and tribes.

Muhammad stressed the need to reform the social order of Mecca. He sought to reestablish an egalitarian society, but this time inspired by the principles of Islam rather than the bonds of kinship.

Islam introduced to Arab society a number of democratic principles that continue to serve as models for Islamic behavior even though they have not always been implemented in practice. For example, although Islamic law distinguishes between Muslims and non-Muslims and between men and women, it does not recognize differences based on class or race. There are no special privileges for the wealthy or powerful, and all believers are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct.

Islamic law also established community consensus as a means of deciding legal matters that are not specifically dictated in the Qur'an or Hadith[2]. It does not require an actual vote on the issue in question, but instead involves the examination of existing community standards surrounding the issue.

Similarly, the initial practice of selecting a leader for the Muslim community reflected democratic principles, such as the accountability of a ruler to his subjects. This tradition began with the death of the Prophet, who left no specific instructions regarding succession. The first several caliphs, or successors to the Prophet, were chosen through the agreement of the Muslim community. This practice is often cited as historical precedent to justify calls for cooperation and consensus in Islamic societies.

The fifth caliph was not selected by consensus but seized the position and established the leadership of the Muslim community as a hereditary position passed down through his family. Thus began the first in a long series of Islamic dynasties in which political

authority was concentrated in the hands of a ruling family, and the general Muslim population no longer participated in decisions regarding succession and related political issues.

The last of the Islamic dynasties was the Turkish Ottoman dynasty, which ruled the Ottoman Empire for over five hundred years. In addition to the area of modern-day Turkey, the Ottoman Empire encompassed much of the Arab world. During its decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the simultaneous emergence of European powers, Muslims were forced to address the sources of stagnation in their societies. Their responses generally reflected two distinct ideologies. The first, known as the *salafiyyah*[3] movement, strove to reexamine Islam in terms of its original principles and to remove the burden and inflexibility imposed by centuries of rigid scholarship and interpretation. The movement's founders claimed that Islam's compatibility with modernity could be found within the religion's original framework and intentions, and they advocated a return to these concepts.

Others looked outside the Islamic world for models of reform, advocating the adoption of Western methods and ideas. Many Arabs viewed the power and prosperity of Europe as a product of its superior technology and democratic institutions, and they believed that the adoption of the latter would lead to similar success and prosperity in their own societies.

Throughout the nineteenth century, this second approach inspired governmental reforms in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt. In the Ottoman Empire, the most notable attempts at building democratic institutions were the *Tanzimat* reforms and the Constitution of 1876. Launched by Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha in 1846, the motivating principle behind the *Tanzimat* reforms was to transform government from an institution that served the ruler to an institution that served the people. These reforms included the development of provincial government councils, the creation of legislative assemblies to review new laws, and the reorganization of the judicial system. The spirit of these reforms influenced the Constitution of 1876, which included the creation of a cabinet, an elected parliament, and guaranteed press and religious freedoms for all subjects of the empire. Unfortunately, corruption and mismanagement throughout the Ottoman government, as well as the threat of bankruptcy, undermined the impact of the *Tanzimat* reforms and the constitution. Soon after the constitution was implemented, the new sultan suspended it during a war with Russia, and it was never reinstated.[4]

The first democratic reforms in Egypt appeared in 1829 when the governor, Muhammad Ali,[5] established an advisory council to assist in his administration of the country. One of Muhammad Ali's successors, Khedive Ismail, continued the idea of a governing council when he established the Assembly of Delegates in 1866, composed mainly of wealthy landowners. Ismail's objective in establishing the assembly was less to empower his subjects than to associate himself with an influential segment of society and protect his position from outside interference. However, by 1875, Egypt's financial crisis forced Ismail to initiate new taxes, angering the landowners and transforming the Assembly of Delegates into a more critical and activist institution.

Ismail's efforts to address Egypt's economic problems also angered the European powers, who forced the Ottoman sultan to remove him in 1879. Three years later, the Egyptian military's frustration over European influence in Egypt and worsening economic conditions culminated in a mutiny led by Colonel Ahmad Urabi. An invasion of British troops quickly suppressed the rebellion and marked the beginning of the British occupation of Egypt. However, in spite of its failure, the Urabi rebellion inspired many Egyptians to examine new political ideas and explore new methods of participatory government.

By the end of the first world war, European control had been established over most of the Arab world. North Africa and Egypt

3. From the phrase *salaf as-salihin*—"the pious ancestors"— referring to the first generation of Muslims who were the companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

4. Secular reforms in Turkey began on a large scale after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. Kemal — also known as Ataturk — "father of the Turks" — redesigned Turkey's institutions of government according to Western models and restricted the influence of religion in public life.

5. Scholars believe that Muhammad Ali was originally an Albanian who came to Egypt in 1798 to help defend against Napoleon's invasion. By 1806, Muhammad Ali had consolidated his rule over Cairo and was declared the governor of Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan Selim III. Throughout his forty-year reign, Muhammad Ali was both a vassal and a rival to the Ottoman Empire. The governorship of Egypt was ultimately designated as a hereditary position for his heirs.

were under the administration of various European powers, and the Arab lands of the former Ottoman Empire were divided into a series of protectorates and mandates under the admini-stration of England and France. Although the Arab people resented Europe's interference in their affairs, they were attracted to Europe's systems of democratic government. Many Arab nationalists and others who sought to rid themselves of the European presence cited democratic principles in their calls for independence.

6. British officials established two sons of the Grand Sharif of Mecca as the kings of Iraq and Transjordan in return for their support during the Arab Revolt against the Turks. Abdullah became the king of Transjordan, and Feisal became king of Iraq. In both countries, the British controlled the economy and foreign policies as well as the military establishment, while the kings supervised various aspects of local administration.

Despite historical precedents and the widespread support of democratic ideas throughout the Arab world, stable, democratic governments have failed to develop in most Arab countries. Factors contributing to this failure range from domestic conditions within the state to regional and international problems that affect the region as a whole. Combined, they have created a fragile and unstable political environment which has deterred democratic reform.

Obstacles to Democracy

European colonialism left a legacy of difficult domestic conditions in the Arab world. During the colonial period, the European powers established the borders of most of the modern Arab states. In the process, they divided regions with historical and economic ties—such as Sudan and Egypt, and Lebanon and Syria—and they merged unrelated regions to form new countries. In the eastern part of the Arab world, the colonial powers created national boundaries where none had existed before, and the resulting states lacked a strong sense of national cohesion. This contributed to political fragmentation and instability which continues today.

The reorganization of the Arab world's borders brought changes in leadership. Circumstances varied from country to country, as some areas were under direct colonial administration, while others were ruled indirectly through local leaders selected by the colonial powers. In North Africa, Morocco and Tunisia were ruled as French protectorates, while Algeria was actually annexed as French territory. The Fertile Crescent was divided into French and British protectorates. French officials created new systems of government for Syria and Lebanon, including Lebanon's confessional system which divided political power among the country's many religious communities. British authorities indirectly controlled Jordan and Iraq, dominating the monarchies that they established for their Arab allies from the first world war,[6] and British officials directly administered the region of Palestine.

With the exception of Algeria and Egypt under Gamal 'Abd el-Nasser, most of the Arab governments that emerged from colonial rule had little popular support and weak political legitimacy. They continued to rely on Europe for political and economic support, which thereby diminished their independence and sovereignty in the eyes of many citizens. In the wake of their colonial experiences, many Arab countries experienced revolutions, coups, and similar forms of political upheaval. Today, political scientists categorize the governments of the Arab world into three general patterns: the totalitarian state, the oil kingdom, and the multiparty state. Each pattern possesses its own obstacles to the development of democratic institutions.

The governments of Hafez al-Assad of Syria and Saddam Hussein of Iraq are examples of the totalitarian state. In both countries, the *Ba'ath* (Renaissance) party dominates state institutions and political activity. Individuals with religious and ethnic ties to the leader occupy important party and government positions, helping to secure the leader's power and providing a strong base of support. Censorship and political repression are widespread, and security forces and secret police use coercive tactics to control the general population. The leaders of these countries have few checks and balances upon their authority.

The oil kingdom is illustrated by the countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the smaller Gulf monarchies. In each country, a single family exercises political authority and controls the revenues generated by oil

production. During the colonial period, these families maintained power with aid and assistance from the British military. Today, they have preserved their positions through the distribution of economic benefits and reliance on traditional institutions such as tribal groups and family alliances. These governments have developed large bureaucracies, but real political power remains in the hands of the ruling families. Popular political participation is extremely limited, and in many cases, civil liberties and freedom of the press are restricted.

Multiparty states, like Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and Tunisia, provide for greater political participation than do the totalitarian states or the oil kingdoms. They possess written constitutions and active, representational parliaments, but the executive branch is the dominant political authority and it usually rules in close association with the military. For the most part, the executive branch uses popular participation to secure support for its rule rather than to encourage competition or empower political rivals.

In all three governmental patterns described above, the dominance of the state and state institutions serve as an obstacle to democracy. Throughout the Arab world, the state is the largest single employer. Between the military and government bureaucracy combined, some governments employ over twenty percent of their populations. In addition, the state frequently controls most of the country's natural resources, finances, and major industries. Employees of state institutions are unlikely to push actively for democratic reforms for fear of jeopardizing their jobs. For its part, the state can often generate political support and quell popular anger and resentment through special programs and subsidies without actually reforming government practices.

The pervasive nature of the state in the Arab world has hindered the development of political, economic, and professional organizations that promote and protect the interests of citizens. In parts of the world where these organizations have developed freely, they empower citizens and provide the opportunity to lobby for changes in governmental policies. In the Arab world, restrictions on professional associations and political activity have prevented the full development of such organizations. In response, some groups have adopted more radical methods in their attempts to institute reforms.

Until recent years, limited educational opportunities and widespread illiteracy contributed to a lack of awareness of democratic principles and values. In the past, discussions of democracy were limited to the educated minority, while most people had little exposure to democratic ideas or arguments for political reform.

The issue of politically motivated aid has been another impediment to democratization. During the cold war, various states throughout the region aligned themselves with the United States or the Soviet Union in return for military and economic support. The United States, eager to prevent Soviet advances in the region and to secure Western supplies of oil, supported regimes that were friendly towards American interests regardless of their domestic political systems. The Soviets did likewise.
With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1991, the United States emerged as the single global superpower. It is unclear whether the Soviet demise will ultimately result in democratic reforms in this region, as some observers have predicted. The United States has the stated goal of supporting and encouraging democratic developments elsewhere in the world, but scholars and diplomats alike continue to debate to what extent the United States should welcome parties or policies that promote democratic principles but which might be opposed to U.S. interests in the region.

As the Gulf war demonstrated, the United States has made the protection and security of Arab oil a major focus of its foreign policy in the region. Although the Gulf countries have attempted to make regional security arrangements to protect against foreign aggression, they continue to rely upon Western countries, especially the United States, to assist in matters of national security. This reliance includes special sales

of military equipment as well as pledges of Western assistance in the face of foreign aggression. These special relationships between Western leaders and the ruling families of the Gulf have led to what some consider contradictions in American foreign policy; rather than endorsing movements for greater democratization, the United States has pledged support for the ruling families which themselves often discourage or repress such movements.

The Demand for Change

Despite the numerous obstacles to democratic reform, the Arab people are increasingly voicing their dissatisfaction with the current state of their societies. As a whole, the region is suffering from a host of economic, social, and political difficulties, and as conditions worsen, feelings of alienation and hostility towards governing authorities are growing. Many people now feel that their governments are unable to solve the problems facing Arab society.

Economic troubles are perhaps the most severe. Many of the large, state-controlled, national industries have become bloated and unproductive, and the development plans of even the wealthier Gulf countries have been hurt by the decline in global oil prices. Still the center of economic activity, the state can no longer provide sufficient jobs or new sources of revenue. Unemployment levels are rising, and many Arab countries face serious international debt. In light of these problems, many experts believe that the only solution is greater privatization and a loosening of state economic controls. Both developments require a greater degree of government accountability and public participation to ensure a stable economic environment and to restore public confidence in domestic investment opportunities.

Poor economic conditions have hit the educated as well as the uneducated. In recent years, educational opportunities for both men and women have proliferated, and literacy rates have risen accordingly. However, upon completing their education, many people are unable to find employment, either in state institutions or the private sector. Those who do manage to find work often can barely survive on their salaries. Combined with high population growth rates and a migration of people from rural to urban areas, the Arab employment crisis has become more serious in recent years, affecting larger and larger segments of the population.

Other sources of popular frustration include the failure of Arab leaders to solve disputes of special significance to both Arabs and Muslims. The most notable examples are the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Gulf war. These disputes relate to feelings at the core of Arab and Islamic identity, such as the notions of Arab unity and the universal brotherhood of Islam. In the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab leaders have been unable to liberate Palestinian land or achieve a territorial compromise with Israel, and accompanying these failures are huge financial and human losses and the frustration of defeat in numerous Arab-Israeli wars. The Gulf war and the Western-led destruction of Iraq further contributed to Arab feelings of resentment. The inability to find an Arab solution to the original dispute between Iraq and Kuwait and the resulting polarization of the region is a source of anger and embarrassment for many Arabs.

No other single movement within the Arab world has been able to capitalize on the current discontent like the growing Islamic resurgence. While movements in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan are the most visible, Muslims throughout the Arab world are mobilizing into different groups and associations. While they may promote different means of accomplishing their goals, all share the desire to build societies centered around Islamic law. Some groups have adopted radical programs that include violent attacks against the state, but others follow more peaceful agendas and work within the political system. In Algeria, Jordan, and Egypt, Muslim groups have developed successful educational and public service programs, some of which have been more effective than those of state-sponsored institutions. They have offered inspiration and hope and have provided Islamic organi-

zations with a proven record of accomplishment. These accomplishments, combined with their religious message and motivations, have made the Islamic movements the chief rival to the current Arab regimes.

In evaluating the challenge of the Islamic resurgence, Arab leaders have acknowledged the multitude of problems facing Arab society. While they recognize the demand for change, fear of losing power discourages most from initiating significant reforms. This dilemma has provoked a variety of responses. The totalitarian states have not tolerated the rise of any opposition movements, Islamic or secular, and they have suppressed attempts at rebellion. The oil kingdoms and multiparty states are searching for new sources of legitimacy and popular support, but they do not want to lose their power or positions.

The methods and patterns of reform vary from state to state and include attempts to minimize the Islamic opposition as well as to reform government institutions in order to satisfy popular demand. Some leaders have chosen to open their societies to greater participation from opposition movements by holding new elections and removing restrictions on the press and political parties. Recent developments in Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen exemplify this process. Saudi Arabia has pledged to create organizations that would assist the government in decision making, such as advisory councils and consultative assemblies. Algeria represents a special case. Economic problems in the late 1980s forced the government to open the political process and hold national elections, but the success of a strong Islamic party, the Islamic Salvation Front, threatened the ruling elite and resulted in a military takeover which reversed earlier reforms.

While the government reforms mentioned above represent recognition of the need for popular participation, some view them as aimed at winning new legitimacy for current regimes rather than at empowering the general population. Others question to what extent the Islamic opposition would institute democratic institutions if it succeeded in obtaining power. The Arab people, just like everyone else in the world, want to participate in determining the policies and decisions that affect their daily lives. It remains to be seen whether the obstacles to the development of democracy in the Arab world can be surmounted and this goal realized.

Country Profiles

ALGERIA

Official name: Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria
Official government type: republic
Independence date: July 5, 1962
Head of State: President Ali Kafi; appointed by the High Council of State after assassination of President Muhammad Boudiaf in June 1992
Suffrage: universal at age 18
Constitution: November 1976
Legal system: socialist, based on French and Islamic law
Major government bodies: unicameral National People's Assembly, Supreme Court
Major political parties: National Liberation Front (FLN), Algerian Movement for Democracy (MDA), Front of Socialist Forces (FFS), Assembly for Culture and Democracy (RCD), Hamas (separate and distinct from the Palestinian Hamas movement)
Last elections: June 1990 for town and regional councils; December 1991 for National People's Assembly, subsequent military coup prevents implementation
GNP per capita: $2,020 (1991)
Literacy rate: 57.4%

BAHRAIN

Official name: State of Bahrain
Official government type: monarchy
Independence date: August 15, 1971
Head of State: Emir Isa bin Salman al-Khalifa; succeeded his father, Salman al-Khalifa upon his death in 1971
Suffrage: none
Constitution: May 1973
Legal system: based on Islamic law and English Common Law
Major government bodies: 30-member National Assembly established in 1973, dissolved in 1975; High Civil Appeals Court
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $6,910 (1991)
Literacy rate: 77.4%

EGYPT

Official name: Arab Republic of Egypt
Official government type: republic
Independence date: February 28, 1922
Head of State: President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak; previously vice-president under Anwar Sadat, inaugurated after Sadat's assassination in October 1981
Suffrage: universal and compulsory at age 18
Constitution: September 1971
Legal system: based on English Common Law, Islamic law, and Napoleonic codes
Major government bodies: unicameral People's Assembly, Supreme Constitutional Court
Major political parties: National Democratic Party, New Wafd, Socialist Labor Party, Nationalist Unionist Progressive Party, others
Last elections: presidential elections in October 1987; People's Assembly elections in November 1990
GNP per capita: $620 (1991)
Literacy rate: 48.4%

IRAQ

Official name: Republic of Iraq
Official governmental type: republic
Independence date: October 3, 1932 as a kingdom, July 14, 1958 as a republic
Head of State: President Saddam Hussein; formerly vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Ba'ath party regional command, succeeded General Hasan al-Bakr, who resigned due to poor health, in July 1979
Suffrage: universal at age 18
Constitution: July 1970; new constitution drafted in 1990 but not yet ratified
Legal system: Islamic law in special religious courts, civil law elsewhere
Major government bodies: Revolutionary Command Council, unicameral National Assembly, Court of Cassation (appeal)
Major political parties: Ba'ath, Progressive National Front
Last elections: April 1989 for National Assembly
GNP per capita: estimated $1,500 — $3,499 (1991)
Literacy rate: 59.7%

JORDAN

Official name: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Official government type: constitutional monarchy
Independence date: May 25, 1946
Head of State: King Hussein ibn Talal; ascended to throne in August 1952 after abdication of his father

Suffrage: universal over age 20
Constitution: January 1952
Legal system: based on Islamic law and French codes
Major government bodies: bicameral National Assembly; Court of Cassation (appeal)
Major political parties: Mustaqbal Party, the Islamic Action Front, Al-'Ahd (The Pledge), the Unionists, Jordanian Progressive Party
Last elections: National Assembly elections held November 1989, next elections to be held with participation of political parties in November 1993
GNP per capita: $1,120 (1991)
Literacy rate: 80.1%

KUWAIT

Official name: State of Kuwait
Official government type: constitutional monarchy
Independence date: June 19, 1961
Head of State: Emir Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah; succeeded his relative Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah upon his death in 1977
Suffrage: adult males residing in Kuwait before 1920 and their male descendants
Constitution: November 1962
Legal system: civil law system with Islamic law significant in personal matters
Major government bodies: National Assembly, High Court of Appeal
Major political parties: officially banned, but a number of opposition groups exist
Last elections: October 1992 for National Assembly
GNP per capita: over $6,000 (1991)
Literacy rate: 73.0%

LEBANON

Official name: Republic of Lebanon
Official government type: parliamentary republic
Independence date: November 22, 1943
Head of State: President Elias Hrawi; elected by Parliament after the assassination of President René Moawad in November 1989
Suffrage: compulsory for males over age 21; authorized for women over age 21 with elementary school education
Constitution: May 1926 (amended)
Legal system: mixture of Ottoman law, canon law, Napoleonic code, and civil law
Major government bodies: unicameral National Assembly; Courts of Cassation (appeal)
Major political parties: Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), Hizbullah, National Liberal Party, Phalange Party, Amal, Independent Nasserite Movement
Last elections: September 1992 for National Assembly
GNP per capita: estimated $1,500 — $3,500 (1991)
Literacy rate: 80.1%

LIBYA

Official name: Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Official government type: popular democracy
Independence date: December 24, 1951
Head of State: Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi, led coup that overthrew King Idris in September 1969
Suffrage: universal and compulsory at age 18
Constitution: December 1969, amended March 1977
Legal system: based on Italian civil law and Islamic law
Major government bodies: unicameral General People's Congress, Supreme Court
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none at national level
GNP per capita: estimated $3,500 — $6,000 (1991)
Literacy rate: 63.8%

MOROCCO

Official name: Kingdom of Morocco
Official government type: constitutional monarchy
Independence date: March 2, 1956
Head of State: King Hassan II; succeeded his father, King Muhammad V, upon his death in 1961
Suffrage: universal over age 20
Constitution: March 1972; new constitution ratified October 1992
Legal system: based on Islamic law and French and Spanish civil law systems
Major government bodies: unicameral House of Representatives, Supreme Court
Major political parties: National Union of Popular Forces, Istiqlal (Independence), Socialist Union of Peoples' Forces, Party of Progress and Socialism, The Organization of Democratic and Popular Action
Last elections: House of Representatives elections in September 1984; next elections scheduled for June 1993
GNP per capita: $1,030 (1991)
Literacy rate: 49.5%

OMAN

Official name: Sultanate of Oman
Official government type: monarchy
Independence date: 1951
Head of State: Sultan and Prime Minister Qaboos ibn Said; overthrew his father, Sultan Said ibn Taimur in July 1970
Suffrage: none
Constitution: none
Legal system: based on English Common Law and Islamic law; ultimate appeal to the sultan
Major government bodies: State Consultative Assembly (advisory function only)
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $5,650 (1990)
Literacy rate: unavailable

QATAR

Official name: State of Qatar
Official government type: monarchy
Independence date: September 3, 1971
Head of State: Emir and Prime Minister Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani; overthrew his cousin, Ahmad al-Thani, in 1972
Suffrage: none
Constitution: April 1970 (provisional)
Legal system: discretionary system controlled by emir; Islamic law significant in personal matters
Major government bodies: unicameral Advisory Council, Court of Appeal
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $15,870 (1990)
Literacy rate: 75.7%

SAUDI ARABIA

Official name: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Official government type: monarchy
Independence date: September 23, 1932 (date of unification)
Head of State: King and Prime Minister Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz al-Saud; succeeded his brother, King Khalid, upon his death in 1982
Suffrage: none
Constitution: none
Legal system: based on Islamic law, secular codes
Major government bodies: Council of Ministers; Supreme Council of Justice; king pledged to establish a new advisory assembly in 1992, with members selected by the king; assembly will function similar to a parliament except members have no authority to enact laws
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $7,070 (1990)
Literacy rate: 62.4%

SUDAN

Official name: Republic of the Sudan
Official government type: military dictatorship
Independence date: January 1, 1956
Head of State: Prime Minister Lt. General Umar al-Bashir; led military coup that overthrew the civilian government of Sadiq al-Mahdi in June 1989
Suffrage: none
Constitution: April 12, 1973 (suspended); interim constitution ratified October 1985 and suspended after 1989 coup
Legal system: originally based on English Common Law and Islamic law; in January 1991, Islamic law became the legal standard for the six northern states under government control
Major government bodies: Revolutionary Command Council, Supreme Court, special Revolutionary Courts
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $400 (1990)
Literacy rate: 27.1%

SYRIA

Official name: Syrian Arab Republic
Official government type: republic
Independence date: April 17, 1946
Head of State: President Hafez al-Assad; organized coup d'etat against Prime Minister Nur al-Din Atasi and General Salah Jadid in October 1970
Suffrage: universal at age 18
Constitution: March 1973
Legal system: based on Islamic law and civil law system
Major government bodies: unicameral People's Council, Supreme Constitutional Court
Major political parties: Arab Socialist Renaissance (Ba'ath) Party, Syrian Arab Socialist Party, Arab Union Socialist Party, Unionist Socialist Party, Communist Party of Syria
Last elections: presidential elections in February 1992; People's Council elections in May 1990
GNP per capita: $1,110 (1991)
Literacy rate: 64.5%

TUNISIA

Official name: Republic of Tunisia
Official government type: republic
Independence date: March 20, 1956
Head of State: President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali; led coup which removed president-for-life Habib Bourguiba in November 1987
Suffrage: universal at age 20
Constitution: June 1959
Legal system: based on French civil law and Islamic law
Major government bodies: unicameral Chamber of Deputies
Major political parties: Constitutional Democratic Party, Tunisian Communist Party, Social Democratic Movement
Last elections: presidential and Chamber of Deputies elections in April 1989
GNP per capita: $1,510 (1991)
Literacy rate: 65.3%

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Official name: United Arab Emirates
Official government type: federation of emirates
Independence date: December 2, 1971
Head of State: President Shaykh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nuhayyan; appointed by the Federal Supreme Council in December 1971, reappointed 1976, 1981
Suffrage: none
Constitution: December 1971 (provisional)
Legal system: ; Islamic law influential; secular codes being introduced
Major government bodies: Federal Supreme Council, Council of Ministers, Federal National Council, Union Supreme Court
Major political parties: none
Last elections: none
GNP per capita: $19,870 (1990)
Literacy rate: unavailable

YEMEN

Official name: Republic of Yemen
Official government type: republic
Independence date: May 22, 1990 (unification date)
Head of State: President Ali Abdullah Saleh; former President of Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), chosen as interim president during negotiations on unification
Suffrage: universal at age 18
Constitution: April 1991
Legal system: based on Islamic law, Turkish law, English Common Law, and local customary law
Major government bodies: unicameral House of Representatives, State Security Court
Major political parties: People's General Congress, Yemeni Socialist Party, al-Islah (Reform)
Last elections: April 1993 for House of Representatives
GNP per capita: $540 (1991)
Literacy rate: 38.5%

THE COURSE OF REFORM: ALGERIA, JORDAN, KUWAIT, YEMEN

	Pre-1989	January–March 1989	April–June 1989	July–September 1989	October–December 1989
Algeria	Oct. 1988 — Algeria's declining economy undermines government's commitment to welfare and employment; demand for political change and riots result; state of emergency declared	Feb. — New constitution ratified, making elections and political pluralism possible		July — New electoral laws allow formation of "associations of a political character" and guarantee freedom of expression and the right to strike Sept. — Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) recognized as legitimate political party	
Jordan			April — Demonstrations and riots in response to sharp price increases, lack of political freedoms, government corruption May — King Hussein lifts many restrictions on the press, frees many political prisoners, schedules parliamentary elections for November		Nov. — Parliamentary elections held; Islamists win majority of seats in Chamber of Deputies; voter turnout low; Jordanian parliament and political groups investigate corruption in government agencies; King Hussein pledges to legalize political parties and end martial law
Kuwait	July 1986 — Tensions over Iran-Iraq war lead emir to suspend National Assembly (the only elected, representative body in all the Arabian Gulf states) and restrict press freedoms				
Yemen					

	January–June 1990	July–September 1990	October–December 1990	January–March 1991
Algeria	June — FIS is biggest winner in municipal and provincial elections, and Algeria's ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), is foremost loser; concerns raised that if FIS wins parliamentary and presidential elections, it will abolish the constitution and rule by Islamic law		Oct. — Protests and riots over unemployment and economic conditions; government relaxes restrictions on formation of civic associations	
Jordan		Aug. — Iraq invades Kuwait; Jordanian criticism of allied policies leads to expulsion of Jordanian and Palestinian workers from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia; U.N blockade halts Jordanian commerce with Iraq, Jordan's biggest trading partner	Dec. — Draft of a National Charter completed; calls for democracy, pluralism, and rule of law under the constitution	
Kuwait		Aug. — Iraqi armed forces invade and occupy Kuwait; majority of ruling family flees the country	Oct. — Kuwait's ruling family announces from capital-in-exile in Saudi Arabia that National Assembly will be restored after Kuwait's liberation from Iraq; 800 men subsequently announce their candidacy for elections	March — Iraqi occupation ends with help of allied coalition; accounts of Kuwaiti abuse of expatriate workers and suspected collaborators with Iraq reach the Western press
Yemen	May — People's Democratic Republic of Yemen ("South Yemen") and Yemen Arab Republic ("North Yemen") merge to form Republic of Yemen; first multiparty elections scheduled for November 1992; new unified leadership advocates multiparty system with guarantees of political freedoms, political participation, human rights	Official press censorship curtailed; 18–20 political parties prepare to register	Yemen's denunciation of anti-Iraq coalition in Gulf war results in cutback in foreign aid from Western donors and expulsion of Yemeni workers from Saudi Arabia; unemployment increases to further strain Yemen's economy	Islamist politicians call for strengthening importance of Islamic law in new constitution scheduled for popular referendum in May

	April–June 1991	July–September 1991	October–December 1991	January–March 1992
Algeria	April — President Bendjedid schedules first round of legislative elections for June May — National Assembly redistricts voting areas to favor FLN; FIS stages strikes and riots; government declares four-month state of emergency, postpones legislative elections indefinitely		Oct. — President Bendjedid schedules elections for December 26 Dec. — 60% of Algeria's eligible voters participate in first round of multiparty elections; 49 parties submit candidates for 430 seats; FIS emerges the victor with 188 seats, while FLN wins only 15 seats; runoff elections scheduled for January	Jan. — Citing election fraud, military forces President Bendjedid to resign, annuls first round of elections, cancels second round; presidential elections indefinitely postponed; new government under Muhammad Boudiaf bans all non-religious activities at mosques Feb. — Higher State Council calls for year-long state of emergency March — Government bans FIS
Jordan	Unemployment rises after return of Jordanian and Palestinian workers from Gulf; U.S. and Gulf countries halt aid in retaliation for Jordanian position on Gulf war June — King Hussein and Jordanian politicians sign National Charter	July — King Hussein cancels most martial law provisions imposed after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war		
Kuwait	April — U.S. Secretary of State encourages Kuwaiti officials to promote democracy and respect for human rights in return for U.S. military and political support May — Martial law court tries 20 suspected collaborators, convicts 5; no evidence presented, no witnesses testify, no lawyers represent the accused	July — Kuwaiti National Council holds its first meeting since the end of the Iraqi occupation; plans for parliamentary elections, still scheduled for October 1992 Aug. — Government announces new law limiting to six months the length of time a prisoner can be held without trial	Dec. — Kuwaiti Democratic Forum becomes country's first open political party	Jan. — Government lifts prepublication censorship of newspapers after journalists agree not to show disrespect to government; government retains right to close newspapers that print objectionable reports, continues to control broadcast media
Yemen	April — Government promises that Islamic law will be a source of legislation, but refuses Islamist demands to modify constitution May — Referendum held; draft constitution approved and new parliamentary elections scheduled for November 1992			

	April–June 1992	July–September 1992	October–December 1992	January–June 1993
Algeria	April — President Boudiaf announces constitutional review and reschedules elections in two years; FIS and Islamic militancy attacks against the government increase June — Boudiaf assassinated; Islamic groups are initially blamed; further investigations suggest involvement of government officials worried about Boudiaf's investigations into corruption of Bendjedid's administration	July — Military court sentences FIS leaders to 12-year prison terms	Government cracks down on publications with contents accused of undermining the state; confrontations between police and Islamic activists escalate	
Jordan		Government denies three leftist parties applying for legal status; they successfully appeal to Supreme Court; National Assembly drafts restrictive laws on press which would forbid criticism of royal family and military, permit only members of officially sanctioned journalists' association to write for newspapers, force journalists to reveal sources in court	Nov. — King Hussein proclaims amnesty for 140 political prisoners (including members of Islamic opposition)	
Kuwait			Oct. — Parliamentary elections held; 278 candidates run for 50 seats; only Kuwaiti men aged 21 or older whose families lived in Kuwait before 1920 are eligible to vote (less than 14% of population); 80% of electorate cast votes; opposition candidates win majority of seats Nov. — Government suspends two newspapers	
Yemen	Political violence increases; several government officials killed or wounded; suspects range from Yemenis who fear losing power in a unified Yemen to Saudi Arabia, for whom a powerful, democratic Yemen poses a threat to its political legitimacy and supremacy in Arabian Peninsula		Nov. — Presidential Council reschedules parliamentary elections for April 1993; general strike follows; government promises salary increases and investigations into corruption; strike called off Dec. — Thousands march to protest falling living standards and failure of government to fulfill promises; many are killed, wounded, or arrested	Jan. — Voter registration begins; protests, demonstrations, assaults continue April — President Ali Saleh's People's General Congress Party is victorious in elections; international observers declare elections successful and a major step toward greater democratization

Perspectives on Democracy in the Arab World

A. Then Abu Bakr spoke and praised and lauded God as is fitting, and then he said: "O people, I have been appointed to rule over you, though I am not the best among you. If I do well, help me, and if I do ill, correct me. Truth is loyalty and falsehood is treachery; the weak among you is strong in my eyes until I get justice for him, please God, and the strong among you is weak in my eyes until I exact justice from him, please God.... Obey me as long as I obey God and His Prophet. And if disobey God and His Prophet, you do not owe me obedience. Come to prayer, and may God have mercy on you."

The Accession Speech of Abu Bakr, the first caliph or successor to the Prophet Muhammad, from *Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*, written by Abu Muhammad Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham, from *Islam, from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople, Volume 1: Politics and War*, edited and translated by Bernard Lewis, Oxford University Press, 1987.

B. Democracy has but one method and one theory. The disparity and dissimilarity of the systems claiming to be democratic is evidence that they are not democratic in fact. The people's authority has only one face and it can be realized only by one method, namely, popular congresses and people's committees. *No democracy without popular congresses and committees everywhere.*

First, the people are divided into basic popular congresses. Each basic popular congress chooses its secretariat. The secretariats together form popular congresses, which are other than the basic ones. Then the masses of those basic popular congresses choose administrative people's committees to replace government administration. Thus all public utilities are run by people's committees which will be responsible to the basic popular congresses and these dictate the policy to be followed by the people's committees and supervise its execution. Thus, both the administration and the supervision become popular and the outdated definition of democracy—*Democracy is the supervision of the government by the people*—comes to an end. It will be replaced by the right definition—*Democracy is the supervision of the people by the people.*

from *The Green Book* by Muammar al-Qadhafi, the leader of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

C. Among all the reasons for which we refuse the democratic dogma there is the fact that democracy relies on the opinion of the majority. The criteria for what is just and reasonable is understood as being the opinion of the majority. Starting from this principle, one sees the heads of the democratic parties trying to win over the greatest possible number of people, even if it is to the detriment of their faith, of their dignity, religion and honor, in the sole objective of winning their votes in an electoral battle.... As for us, the people of the *sunna*[1], we believe that justice (*haq*) only comes from the decisive proofs of the *shari'a*[2] and not from a multitude of demagogic actors and voices. Those who followed the Prophet were a very small number, while those who followed idols were a multitude.

from an editorial in *Al-Mounquid*, the newspaper of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), by Ali Belhadj, one of the principle leaders of the FIS

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[1] In this context, the term *sunna* refers to the *ahl al-sunna*, the followers of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (i.e., the Muslim community)

[2] Islamic law

D. It follows that an Islamic order of government is essentially a form of representative democracy. But this statement requires the following qualification. First an Islamic republic is not strictly speaking a direct government of and by the people; it is a government of the *shari'a*. But, in a substantial sense, it is a popular government since the *shari'a* represents the convictions of the people and, therefore, their direct will. This limitation on what a representative body can do is a guarantee of the supremacy of the religious will of the community. The consultative system of government in Islam is related to and reinforced by similar features of Muslim society since politics is an integral part of all religious life and not simply a separate secular vocation. The fair distribution of political power through *shura*[3], whether direct or indirect, is supported by an equally just distribution of economic wealth. So an Islamic democracy may never degenerate to a formal system where, because of the concentration of wealth, the rich alone exercise their political rights and determine what is to be decided. Also, ideally there is no clerical or *ulama*[4] class, which prevents an elitist or theocratic government. Whether termed a religious, a theocratic, or even a secular theocracy, an Islamic state is not a government of the *ulama*. Knowledge, like power, is distributed in a way that inhibits the development of a distinct, religious hierarchy. Nor is an Islamic democracy government by the male members of society. Women played a considerable role in public life during the life of the Prophet; and they contributed to the election of the third caliph. Only afterwards were women denied their rightful place in public life, but this was history departing from the ideal, just like the development of classes based on property, knowledge (*ilm*), or other status. In principle, all believers, rich or poor, noble or humble, learned or ignorant, men or women, are equal before God, and they are His vicegerents on earth and the holders of His trust.

from "The Islamic State" by Hassan al-Turabi in *Voices of Resurgent Islam, edited by John Esposito*, Oxford University Press, 1983

E. Sovereignty belongs to the people. It is the people who choose their rulers and the people's continued satisfaction is the prime condition for the perpetuation of a ruler's power. The people have the right to choose their Imams and to dismiss them. In other words the people have supervisory powers over authority. This is a model of a civil authority elected by the representatives of the people. The authority's commitment to Islamic law does not vest in them religious legitimacy. This is a common misconception in the West where divine right was an essential component of monarchical authority. In Islam, religion is the source of values and law, but not of power.

from "The Misunderstandings between Islam and Democracy" by columnist Fahmi Howeidi in the Egyptian English-language weekly *Al-Ahram*, August 6-12, 1992

F. I can say in all honesty and sincerity that there is no contradiction whatsoever between Islam and democracy....The state in Islam is not the voice of God, but it is the voice of the people. This means that the Islamic state goes against the theocratic state and is indeed a democratic state. The system provided by democracy for people to express their will we consider it an Islamic system, and a very good one....As Muslims we have no problem with the democratic system in terms of elections, parliamentary representation, alternation of power, various freedoms of speech, the press, human rights, etc.

from an interview with Rachid Ghannouchi, exiled leader of Tunisia's al-Nahda movement

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[3] consultation

[4] In its classical sense, the term *ulama* refers to the unofficial body of religious scholars who issued edicts on various points of Islamic law and theology for the guidance of the Muslim community.

G. We perceive Jordanian democracy as a model and an example as well as an ultimate choice for our people from which there will be no turning back. Also, our respect for freedom, justice, human rights and human dignity is a solid commitment whose underpinnings—of thought, method, and message—are firmly rooted in every part of our land.

Attempts at achieving a true (Arab) renaissance and union have failed in the past because they had no proper foundations. They lacked the element of self-criticism, suffered from short-sightedness and were not based on right, freedom, equality, or justice. They failed also because many of them took the form of grandiose or showcase projects. They have failed to solve cumulative problems of social backwardness, illiteracy, low standards of living, the chasm between the elite and the people, cultural crises, extremism, tribalism, sectarianism and dependence on others. Above all was the absence of guarantees ensuring freedom, dignity and means of livelihood. Can we then aspire to rejuvenate ourselves and recreate a national fabric in the spirit of true liberty, commitment to our Arab heritage and adherence to the [Islamic] message? It is imperative that there be a connection with our roots but also an openness to life and a release from despair.

from a speech by King Hussein of Jordan to the Jordanian people on November 23, 1992

Suggested Background References

American-Arab Affairs, Number 26, Spring 1991.

Contains a synopsis of presentations from a three-day workshop on "Democratization in the Middle East" hosted by the American Political Science Association, documenting general trends as well as individual country studies.

"Democracy in the Arab World." *Middle East Report*, No. 174, January/February 1992.

An entire issue dedicated to the development of democracy in the Arab world. Articles survey conditions in Jordan, Syria, Algeria, and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as issues of human rights and liberalization.

Esposito, John and James Piscatori. "Democratization and Islam." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991.

Focusing on the compatibility of Islam and democracy, this article examines the rise of Islamic movements in the Arab world and the social and religious motivations behind them.

Hudson, Michael. "After the Gulf War: Prospects for Democratization in the Arab World." *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991.

Examines the potential for greater democratization in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen in light of political and economic developments before and after the Gulf war.

Karbal, Mohamad M. "Obstacles to Democracy in the Arab World." *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1993. (pages 24-33)

Refuting the idea that Islam has prevented democratization in the Arab world, the author examines obstacles to democracy created by secular Arab governments, international pressures, and the region's colonial legacy.

The Middle East Journal, Vol. 47, No. 2, Spring 1993.

Dedicated to the evolution of civil society and democracy in the Middle East, this special issue features case studies of Egypt, Syria, and Kuwait, as well as related political and economic issues.

Muhlberger, Steven and Phil Paine. "Democracy's Place in World History." *Journal of World History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 1993.

In attempting to dispel the notion that democracy is a purely Western concept, the authors offer compeling examples of democratic organization and behavior in a variety of non-Western cultures.

Muslih, Muhammad, and Augustus Richard Norton. "The Need for Arab Democracy." *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1991. (pages 3-19)

Describes problems of legitimacy and governmental systems that have prevented the growth of democratic institutions in the Arab world. The authors also suggest possible models to assist future efforts towards democratization.

Wright, Robin. "Islam, Democracy, and the West." *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1992. (pages 131-145)

A discussion of Islamic movements' participation in the political process, highlighting recent developments in Algeria and Central Asia, as well as the response of Western governments.

Individual Country Maps

The statistics accompanying the maps on the following pages were compiled from The World Bank's *World Development Report 1992* and the Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook 1991*.

ALGERIA

Official Name:	Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria
Capital:	Algiers
Area:	2,381,740 km^2
Population:	26,022,188 (1991)
Major Cities:	Algiers, Annaba, Constantine, Oran, Sétif, Tlemcen
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab-Berber 99%, European 1%
Major Religions:	Sunni Muslim (state religion) 99%, Christian and Jewish 1%
Languages:	Arabic (official), French, Berber dialects
Per Capita GNP:	$2,020 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	57.4% (1990)

BAHRAIN

Official Name:	State of Bahrain
Capital:	Manama
Area:	620 km^2
Population:	536,974 (1991)
Major Cities:	Manama
Major Ethnic Groups:	Bahraini 63%, Asian 13%, other Arab 10%, Iranian 8%, other 6%
Major Religions:	Muslim (Shi'a 70%, Sunni 30%)
Languages:	Arabic (official), English widely spoken, Farsi, Urdu
Per Capita GNP:	$6,910 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	77.4% (1989)

EGYPT

Official Name:	Arab Republic of Egypt
Capital:	Cairo
Area:	1,001,447 km^2
Population:	54,451,588 (1991)
Major Cities:	Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Asyût, Luxor, Aswan
Major Ethnic Groups:	Eastern Hamitic 90%, Greek, Italian, Syro-Lebanese 10%
Major Religions:	Muslim (mostly Sunni) 94%, Coptic Christian and other 6%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English and French widely understood by educated classes
Per Capita GNP:	$620 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	48.4% (1990)

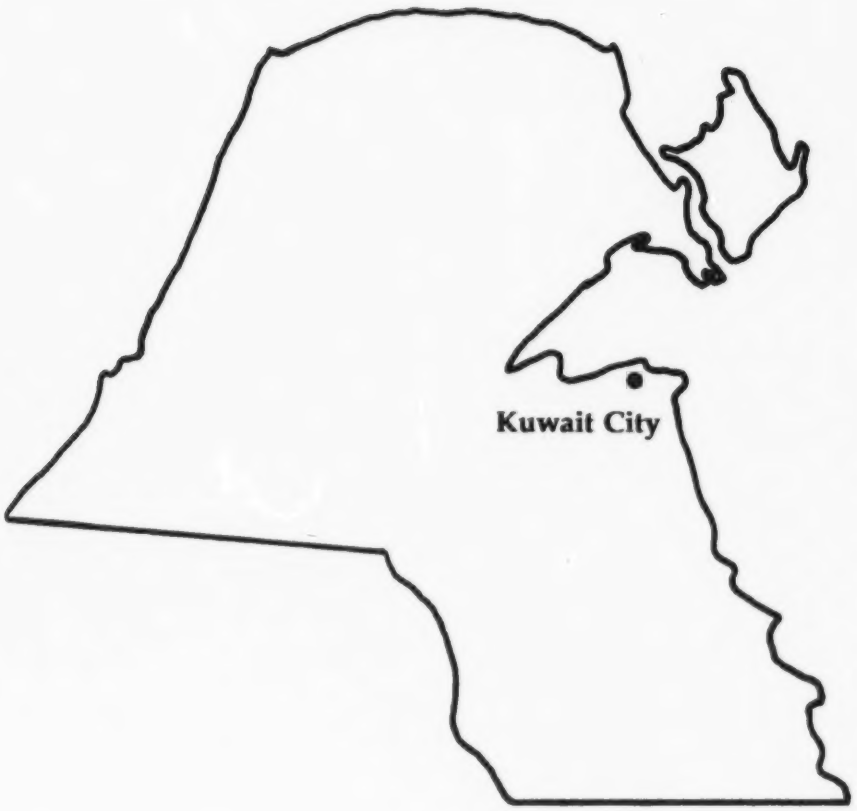
IRAQ

Official Name:	Republic of Iraq
Capital:	Baghdad
Area:	434,920 km^2
Population:	19,524,718 (1991)
Major Cities:	Baghdad, Basra, Karbala, Kirkuk, Mosul, Sulaimaniya
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 75-80%, Kurdish 15-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian, and other 5%
Major Religions:	Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60-65%, Sunni 32-37%), Christian or other 3%
Languages:	Arabic (official), Kurdish, Assyrian, Armenian
Per Capita GNP:	Estimated in $1,500 to $3,499 range (1991)
Literacy Rate:	59.7% (1990)

JORDAN

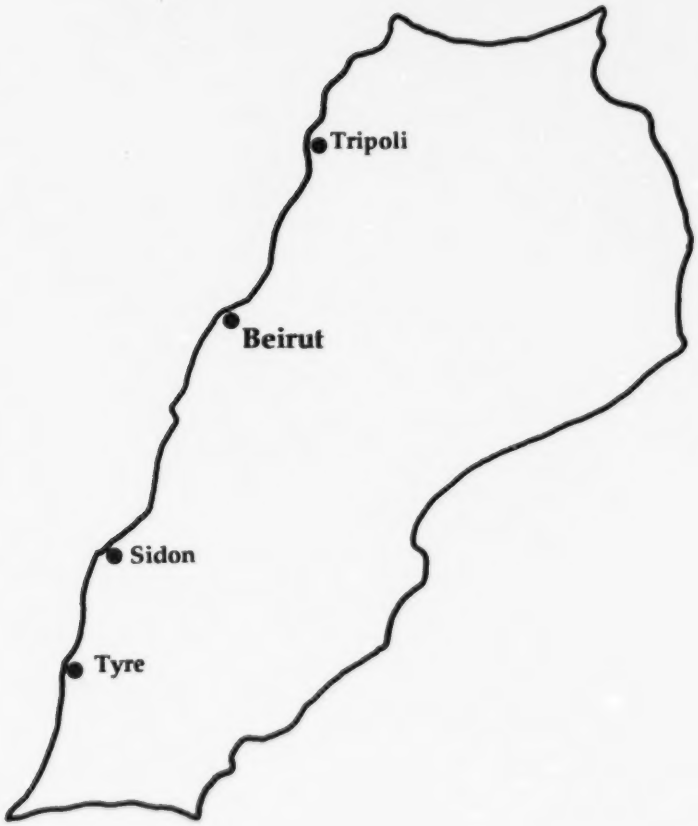
Official Name:	Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Capital:	Amman
Area:	91,880 km^2
Population:	3,412,553 (1991)
Major Cities:	Amman, Petra, Al 'Aqabah, Irbid
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%
Major Religions:	Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 8%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English widely understood among upper and middle classes
Per Capita GNP:	$1,120 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	80.1% (1990)

KUWAIT



Official Name:	State of Kuwait
Capital:	Kuwait
Area:	17,820 km^2
Population:	2,204,400 (1991)
Major Cities:	Kuwait
Major Ethnic Groups:	Kuwaiti 27.9%, other Arab 39%, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%, other 20.1%
Major Religions:	Muslim 85% (Shi'a 30%, Sunni 45%, other 10%), Christian, Hindu, Parsi, and other 15%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English widely spoken
Per Capita GNP:	over $6,000 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	73% (1990)

LEBANON



Official Name:	Republic of Lebanon
Capital:	Beirut
Area:	10,400 km^2
Population:	3,384,626 (1991)
Major Cities:	Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 95%, Armenian 4%, other 1%
Major Religions:	Muslim 75%, Christian 25%, Judaism negl%, 17 legally recognized sects
Languages:	Arabic and French (both official), Armenian, English
Per Capita GNP:	Estimated in $1,500 to $3,499 range (1991)
Literacy Rate:	80.1% (1990 estimate)

LIBYA

Official Name:	Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Capital:	Tripoli
Area:	1,759,540 km^2
Population:	4,350,742 (1991)
Major Cities:	Tripoli, Benghazi, Misratah, Port Brega, Sabha, Sidra, Tobruk
Major Ethnic Groups:	Berber and Arab 97%, other 3%
Major Religions:	Sunni Muslim 97%
Languages:	Arabic (official)
Per Capita GNP:	Estimated in $3,500 to $6,000 range (1991)
Literacy Rate:	63.8% (1990)

MOROCCO

Official Name:	Kingdom of Morocco
Capital:	Rabat
Area:	446,550 km^2
Population:	26,181,889 (1991)
Major Cities:	Rabat, Casablanca, Tangier, Fès, Marrakech
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab-Berber 99.1%, non-Moroccan 0.7%, Jewish 0.2%
Major Religions:	Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2%
Languages:	Arabic (official), several Berber dialects; French is the language of business, government, diplomacy and post-primary education.
Per Capita GNP:	$1,030 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	49.5% (1990)

OMAN

Official Name:	Sultanate of Oman
Capital:	Muscat
Area:	212,460 km^2
Population:	1,534,011 (1991)
Major Cities:	Muscat, Sur, Nizwa, Suhar, Salalah
Major Ethnic Groups:	Mostly Arab, with small Balochi, Zanzibari, and South Asian groups
Major Religions:	Ibadhi Muslim 75%, Muslim (Sunni and Shi'a), Hindu
Languages:	Arabic (official), English, Balochi, Urdu, Indian dialects
Per Capita GNP:	$5,650 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	Not available

QATAR

Official Name:	State of Qatar
Capital:	Doha
Area:	11,000 km^2
Population:	518,478 (1991)
Major Cities:	Doha
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 40%, Pakistani 18%, Indian 18%, Iranian 10%, other 14%
Major Religions:	Muslim 95%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English
Per Capita GNP:	$15,870 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	75.7% (1986)

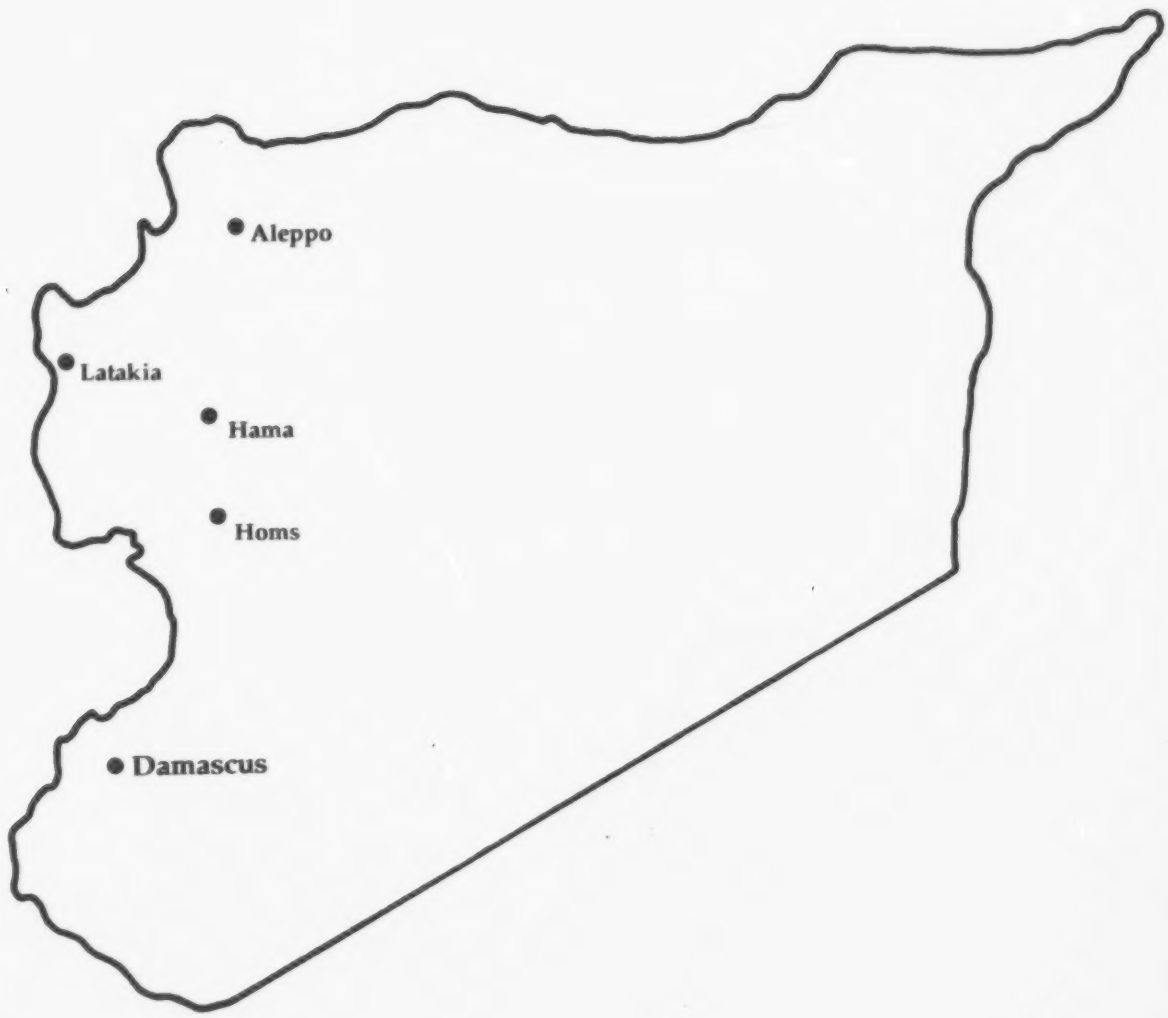
SAUDI ARABIA

Official Name:	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Capital:	Riyadh
Area:	2,149,690 km^2
Population:	17,869,558 (1991)
Major Cities:	Riyadh, Mecca, Medina, Jeddah, Taif
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10%
Major Religion:	Muslim 100%
Language:	Arabic
Per Capita GNP:	$7,070 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	62.4% (1990)

SUDAN

Official Name:	Republic of the Sudan
Capital:	Khartoum
Area:	2,505,810 km^2
Population:	27,220,088 (1991)
Major Cities:	Khartoum, Dongala, Juba, Kosti, Omdurman, Port Sudan, Wadi Halfa
Major Ethnic Groups:	Black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%
Major Religions:	Sunni Muslim 70%, indigenous beliefs 20%, Christian 5%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English, Nubian and other dialects
Per Capita GNP:	$400 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	27.1% (1990)

SYRIA



Official Name:	Syrian Arab Republic
Capital:	Damascus
Area:	185,180 km^2
Population:	12,965,996 (1991)
Major Cities:	Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hamath, Latakia, Palmyra
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 90.3%, Kurds, Armenians, and other 9.7%
Major Religions:	Sunni Muslim 74%, Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects 16%, Christian 10%, tiny Jewish communities
Languages:	Arabic (official), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, French widely understood
Per Capita GNP:	$1,110 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	64.5% (1990)

TUNISIA

Official Name:	Republic of Tunisia
Capital:	Tunis
Area:	163,610 km^2
Population:	8,276,096 (1991)
Major Cities:	Tunis, Carthage, Gabes, Qairouan, Sfax, Sousse
Major Ethnic Groups:	Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish less than 1%
Major Religions:	Muslim 98%, Christian 1%, Jewish less than 1%
Languages:	Arabic (official), Arabic and French (commerce)
Per Capita GNP:	$1,510 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	65.3% (1990)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Official Name:	United Arab Emirates
Capital:	Abu Dhabi
Area:	83,600 km^2
Population:	2,389,759 (1991)
Major Cities:	Dubai, Ash Shariqah, Ajman, Umm al Qaymayn, Ra's al Khaymah, Al Fujayrah, Al Ayn
Major Ethnic Groups:	Emirian 19%, other Arab 23%, South Asian (fluctuating) 50%, other expatriates 8%. Less than 20% of population are UAE citizens.
Major Religions:	Muslim 96% (Shi'a 16%), Christian, Hindu, other 4%
Languages:	Arabic (official), Persian, English, Hindi, Urdu
Per Capita GNP:	$19,870 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	Not available

WEST BANK/GAZA STRIP

Official Name:	West Bank/Gaza Strip (Israeli Occupied Territories)
Capital:	To Be Determined
Area:	6,240 km^2 (WB - 5,860 km^2; G - 380 km^2)
Population:	1,728,334 (WB - 1,086,081; G - 642,253) (1991)
Major Cities:	West Bank - East Jerusalem, Nablus, Nazareth, Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem; Gaza Strip - Gaza.
Major Ethnic Groups:	WB - Palestinian and other Arab 88%, Jewish 12%; G - Palestinian and other Arab 99.8%, Jewish 0.2%
Major Religions:	WB - Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 80%, Jewish 12%, Christian and other 8%; G - Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 99%, Christian 0.7%, Jewish 0.3%
Languages:	Arabic, Israeli settlers speak Hebrew, English widely understood
Per Capita GNP:	WB - $1,000 (1990); G - $430 (1990)
Literacy Rate:	Not available

YEMEN

Official Name:	Republic of Yemen
Capital:	Sanaa
Area:	527,970 km^2
Population:	10,062,633 (1991)
Major Cities:	Sanaa, Aden, Al Hudaydah, Ta'izz, Al Mukha, Al Mukalla
Major Ethnic Groups:	North - Arab 90%, Afro-Arab 10%, South - Arab, some Indians, Somalis, Europeans
Major Religions:	North - Muslim (Sunni and Shi'a) 100%, South - Sunni Muslim, Christian, Hindu
Language:	Arabic
Per Capita GDP:	$540 (1991)
Literacy Rate:	38.5% (1990)

Evaluation
Arab World Almanac

In order to develop future issues of the *Arab World Almanac*, AMIDEAST would like to hear from teachers who have used our materials. We are constantly searching for new and creative methods of introducing the Arab world to the classroom, and we need your feedback to evaluate our efforts. Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation and return it to AMIDEAST.

1. Which topics in this *Almanac* did you use? (circle all that apply)
   a. Women and the Family in the Arab World
   b. Central Asia, Past and Present
   c. Government and Democracy in the Arab World

2. What was the grade level of the students with whom you used the *Almanac*?
   a. 7th – 8th grade
   b. 9th – 10th grade
   c. 11th – 12th grade
   d. other (please specify) _____

3. What was the focus of the class or classes in which you used the *Almanac*?
   a. history
   b. geography
   c. current affairs
   d. Middle East
   e. other (please specify) _____

4. Which sections of the *Almanac* did you utilize? (circle all that apply)
   a. background essay
   b. classroom exercises and activities
   c. suggested background resources

5. How effective did you find the lesson objectives in your preparations to use the *Almanac* in your classroom?
   a. very effective
   b. somewhat effective
   c. not very effective
   d. totally ineffective

6. How appropriate was the background essay for your students?
   a. beyond their abilities
   b. a challenge to their abilities
   c. just right for their level
   d. too simplistic

7. How well did the background essay introduce the *Almanac's* topic?
   a. very well
   b. satisfactorily
   c. poorly

8. How useful were the classroom exercises and activities?
   a. very useful
   b. somewhat useful
   c. not very useful
   d. useless

9. How well did the lesson exercises and activities relate to the lesson objectives?
   a. very well
   b. satisfactorily
   c. poorly

10. How appropriate were the exercises and activities for your students?
   a. beyond their abilities
   b. a challenge to their abilities
   c. just right for their level
   d. too simplistic

11. How did you find the instructions for the exercises and activities?
   a. clear and easy to understand
   b. ambiguous but understandable
   c. obscure and confusing

12. How did you find the quality of the maps and charts?
   a. excellent
   b. satisfactory
   c. poor

13. How useful were the lists of suggested background references?
   a. very useful
   b. somewhat useful
   c. not very useful
   d. useless

14. Please list any additional comments or suggestions that you might have about the *Almanac*, such as the topics we have covered, our format/style, and the related components of the *Almanac*.

15. Are there any particular topics that you would like to see covered in future volumes of *Arab World Almanac*?

15. How did you learn about *Arab World Almanac*?

We would also appreciate the opportunity to see samples of students' work from the classroom exercises and activities. Please return any samples and this form to: AMIDEAST Publications, 1100 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Thank you for your assistance.

AMIDEAST
1100 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036